THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8 April, 1926 Number 4

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Published at
162 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON, S.W. 1

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Published at
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London
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The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices:

162 BUCKINGHAM PALACE RD., S.W.1

Telephone : SLOANE 5412.

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NOTES of the MONTH

The I.L.P. and the Class Struggle—The I.L.P. and Unity—What is I.L.P. Policy?—A Growing Division—The Failure of Centrism—"New" Tendencies—And Old Habits—Construction and Destruction—What is "Constructive"?—Some Misconceptions—Unification or United Front—"Changing" Communism—Civil War and Mass Struggle—The Real Issue.

THE Independent Labour Party Conference is meeting on the eve of heavy working-class struggles. The Coal Report is a declaration of war; and, taken in conjunction with the Engineering Employers' attack and the Government preparations, raises such clear signs of approaching widespread conflict that no working-class organisation can afford to ignore them. The *New Leader* has said that the Coal Report "means war." What has the Independent Labour Party to offer to meet this situation? This is the question which the working class will have to ask of the Conference. A situation of this character makes more than ever inappropriate lengthy and elaborate "policy reports" for the ideal reconstruction of society. The crucial questions to be decided by the workers are the questions of working-class action and the united working-class front. By its answer to these questions the character of the Conference will be judged.

RECENTLY the Independent Labour Party has brought forward a proposal for a Unity Conference between the Second and Third Internationals. It is not in fact likely that the resolution in which they are making this proposal will be adopted by the Second International; the Labour Party has already declared uncompromising opposition, and the Labour Party is certainly not on the right of the Continental Social Democratic Parties. In that case nothing more will come of the resolution, unless the Independent Labour Party is prepared

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to go a step further and take independent action—either alone or with such other parties or groups of parties as are prepared to act with it—in coming closer to the Third International with a view to realising that "working-class solidarity against capitalist and imperialist reaction" which is its declared objective in the resolution. But the proposal is already an indication of the present tendencies and processes within the Independent Labour Party; and in the resolution in which it is made, as well as in the statements accompanying it, the present leaders of the Independent Labour Party endeavour to state their position in relation to the Revolution. As the present leaders of the Independent Labour Party are endeavouring to provide an alternative policy for the Labour Movement to that of MacDonald, Henderson and the Right Wing, this statement (in conjunction with the proposals presented to the Easter Conference of their Party) is worth examination.

THE Independent Labour Party occupies to-day an extraordinary position. In name and in numbers it is the overwhelming dominant party of the leading sections of the Labour Movement. Over 70 per cent. of the Labour Members of Parliament belong to its ranks. It numbers the majority of the Parliamentary Executive, of the Labour Party Executive, of past and future Labour Ministers, and a good proportion of Trade Union officials. If ever a party was dominant and responsible in a Labour Movement it is the Independent Labour Party in the British Movement. If the Independent Labour Party had any policy, or if its members represented that policy, that policy could become the official policy of the Movement to-morrow. Yet what do we find? The Independent Labour Party is publicly attacking and criticising the official policy of the Labour Movement. The leaders of the Labour Party on their side—most of them members of the Independent Labour Party—are venomously attacking the Independent Labour Party. The leading responsible party in the Movement is endeavouring to disclaim responsibility for the policy which its own members are carrying out. This is a very significant stage to have reached. The phenomena here revealed are the

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phenomena of a party in dissolution. They recall in many respects the parallel picture of the Liberal Party in dissolution. The parallel is indeed worth pursuing. The Liberal Party, which sought to deny the class struggle, is to-day in dissolution before its advance. The Independent Labour Party, which sought to perform the same task on a plane of greater concession to class organisation, is to-day at the beginning of the same process. Liberalism can appear in many garbs, including a "socialist" garb; but its essence is the same, the denial of the class struggle; and its fate is the same.

THE present process in the Independent Labour Party is a reflection of the process in the whole Labour Movement. So long as the workers, while moving in disillusionment from the Liberal Party, were content to accept the liberal leadership of the Independent Labour Party, that body could maintain in blissful peace its contradictory position: on the one hand, basing itself in practice on the working class and drawing its political strength from them; while at the same time denying in theory all class politics, and proclaiming Socialism, not as a brutal physical struggle of the dispossessed class against the possessing class for the material ownership of the means of production, but as a beautiful idealist's dream, existing in heaven above the classes and to be realised by a religious process of conversion. The maintaining of these two completely contradictory characters in equilibrium was performed by the creation of a mystic supra-rational "Spirit of the I.L.P.," "No Dogma," "Tolerance," "Fellowship," &c., under cover of which was ruled out any serious consideration of facts, logic, argument, reason, history and experience. But this position could not continue indefinitely. Facts inevitably break in on the elysium of harmony. On the one hand, the class struggle deepens: capitalism develops to war, increasing violence and driving down of the standard of the workers; the workers are forced forward by the struggle for existence to class consciousness and the necessity for overthrowing capitalist power. On the other hand, the I.L.P. leaders, raised up by the same process to governmental position,

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are compelled to reveal the emptiness of their phrases and the impossibility of class neutrality, and to become in fact the servants of the capitalists. Division grows between the working class and MacDonald. The once conservative Trade Unions move to the left; the I.L.P. to the right. And the few individuals still clinging to the old I.L.P. tradition raise a lament as they find themselves stranded, complain of rebellion on one side and betrayal on the other, and call for the old halcyon days of Unity and Pure Socialism, without understanding the process that has taken place.

"IF you try to run a Socialist Party," complained the chairman of the I.L.P., Clifford Allen, in an article on "Straightforward Socialism," in February, 1925, when the sequel of the Labour Government had begun to show itself, "if you try to run a Socialist Party or a Socialist paper, and happen to select Socialism as your programme, you are wiped off the map. The only thing that seems to matter is whether you call yourself a 'Left Winger' or, on the other hand, whether you face up to what are described as 'political realities.'" Here is contained the eternal complaint of the unhappy Centrist when his day is past and the facts have exposed him: when the advance of the class struggle has left him stranded, driving all the leaders who are faced with action to right or to left, to answer yes or no, to capitalism or to the working class. Certainly, it is excellent to endeavour to raise again the banner of Socialism after the muddy experience of MacDonald's Government. But first it is worth while to be clear what Socialism is, since MacDonald also has played with the banner of Socialism; and it is worth while to be clear why the muddy experience of MacDonald's Government happened, and why MacDonald's Socialism led to it; since like beginnings again may only lead to like conclusions. For after all MacDonald is not a simple renegade or runaway of the Barnes or Shackleton type; he is an I.L.P. leader, officially approved by the I.L.P. over his conduct of his government. MacDonald is in fact the practical expression of I.L.P. policy when confronted with realities. It is, therefore, worth while to be clear that those

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who throw stones at him, in the name of primitive I.L.P. policy, are not themselves repetitions of MacDonaldism at an earlier stage of development, or not yet confronted with the necessity of facing realities.

IT is from this point of view that the new tendencies in the Independent Labour Party need to be estimated: whether they do in fact represent something new; whether they do show signs of breaking away from the old illusions of idealist socialism; or whether they are in reality only a fresh blossoming from the old tree of utopian beginnings and opportunist endings. It is not enough to attack MacDonald; it is necessary also to understand him and what he represents. MacDonald's socialism is a grafting of the old pre-Marxist socialism, which begins with the propaganda of a beautiful ideal society of the future, and then, in the name of that future classless society, endeavours to come forward as a classless saviour and statesman into the midst of the dog-fight of the existing class struggle. Unfortunately in existing class society there is no action or politics that is not the action and politics of one class or the other: either the maintenance of capitalist rule and repression or the attack on capitalist rule and repression (since it is impossible to live in a negative); and in consequence MacDonald, since he has rejected the "narrow" class politics of the workers, and still aspires to the reins of government in order to further his ideal schemes, can only administer in practice on behalf of the dominant class, the capitalist class. So our idealist socialist finds himself building cruisers, bombing Asiatic villagers, &c. This is the principal lesson of the MacDonald Government. Socialism has no meaning save as the politics and struggle of the working class. Socialism, when it is preached as an ideal in general, apart from the class struggle, becomes only a duping and enslaving of the working class. Socialism as an ideal only has meaning when its whole propaganda and objective in the present capitalist epoch is concentrated on the destruction and overthrow of existing capitalist class power by the working class.

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HAS the lesson been learned by the new spokesmen arising in the Independent Labour Party? It is to be feared this is still doubtful. When we turn to the host of documents that have been poured out for the Easter Conference, we feel that we are on familiar ground. "Industry as a Public Service." "The reorganisation of society on the basis of both political and industrial democracy." "Revolution by Reason." "There should be a Minister of Industry answerable to Parliament." "A re-constituted mandate system." Really these "new" policies seem to contain a considerable amount of very old junk. The utopia-spinners are at their old hobby. The fashionable catchword of the moment may vary. One day it is "Industrial Democracy." Next day it is "Credit Control" and the "Raising of Purchasing Power" and "Ironing-out the Trade Cycle." But always the fundamental characteristic is the same. It is the conception that a "scheme" can solve capitalism; that, given a little organisation and goodwill and forethought, the anarchies and inequalities of capitalism can be smoothed over; that capitalism can be rationalised; that the tiger can cease to be a tiger and become a milch-cow. And the fashionable chatter and excitement of the moment always concerns the exact characteristics of the scheme of the moment—("Ought the consumers' representatives to have more than a consultative voice?" "Should family allowances be included in the living wage?")—and never the one plain brutal question which underlies all possibilities of reorganisation, namely, the material conquest of the means of production from a class which holds them by an elaborate apparatus ultimately based on armed force. Face That or Face Nothing—this is the one plain issue which confronts all who would be socialists. The result of not facing it is and can only be MacDonaldism in practice. The spinning of utopias is not an alternative to MacDonaldism; it is the counterpart of MacDonaldism: as the votes at the I.L.P. Conferences in official approval of MacDonald's policy clearly show. The only alternative to MacDonaldism is, not the spinning of schemes of reorganisation within capitalism, but the complete break with capitalism and complete concentration on the existing actual working-class struggle progressively up to the conquest of working-class power and dictatorship.

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Whoever is not ready to face this is not in reality an opponent of MacDonald.

IT is in the light of this that the question of "Constructive" and "Destructive" policies, which so much exercises the Independent Labour Party, can alone be considered. The spokesmen of the I.L.P. often endeavour to state their difference from the revolutionaries by claiming that they stand for a constructive policy, whereas the revolutionaries stand for a destructive policy. A revolutionary party, declares Brailsford, in explaining the "central obstacle" to unity, which believes in the inevitability of civil war as the outcome of the class struggle, "will work with destruction rather than construction as its immediate objective." This opposition is extremely instructive. It is true that the revolutionaries do work for the destruction—of capitalism and capitalist class power: and, what is more, declare that the destruction of capitalist class power and the transference of power to the working class is the necessary preliminary for any socialist reconstruction. It is true also that the I.L.P. does completely neglect in practice this destructive task, and builds its castles in the air without any serious reference to the class enemy, his power and his methods. In this sense the revolutionaries are destructive—of capitalism; and the I.L.P. is not destructive—of capitalism. So far as this goes, Brailsford may enjoy the credit of his claim. But the sequel from this, when it comes to the sense of "constructive," is even more important.

FOR it is not true that the revolutionaries are not engaged in "constructive" tasks and the I.L.P. is. On the contrary, it is only necessary to look back over the history of the past few years to see the extent to which the constructive slogans of the Labour Movement—"Back to the Unions," "The United Front," "100 per cent. Trade Unionism," "The Workers' Alliance," &c.—have come directly from the revolutionaries in the first place, and have only at a later stage been slowly taken up by the reformists. But it is an entirely different sense of "constructive" that the I.L.P. means. When the revolutionary speaks of "constructive" he means the constructive

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tasks of the working class, the constructive tasks of building up the forces of the workers for the overthrow of capitalist power and the organisation of the workers' society. But when the I.L.P. speak of "constructive" they mean the construction of existing society, that is, of capitalist society. This was the sense in which all the Labour leaders advocated "Producing More" as the necessary "constructive" task after the war in opposition to the "destructive" revolutionary policy. This kind of "constructive" policy leads only to destruction for the working class, to restoration for capitalism and misery for the workers, to renewed imperialist rivalry and world war. It is therefore in reality destructive in the highest sense. Thus the sham distinction which the I.L.P. sets up between "constructive" and "destructive" contains within itself in reality the whole difference between the service of capitalism and the service of the working class.

THIS consideration should make it easier to clear out of the way some of the alleged "obstacles" to "working-class solidarity" which the I.L.P. claims to find in the policy of the revolutionaries, although they exist only through the misunderstanding of revolutionary policy by the I.L.P. Brailsford writes:—

> The central obstacle, as we see it, is the belief which this Communist International proclaimed, when it was founded, that civil war is the inevitable outcome of the class struggle. A party which holds that belief must base all its strategy upon it. It will take no pains to avoid the predestined conflict with arms; it will work with destruction rather than construction as its immediate objective. For our part we refuse to say "inevitable"; we should see in civil war the ruin of our hopes; if it must come, we would take care that it can come by the revolt of a lawless Fascist minority against a Socialist Majority Government. If this difference of opinion is unbridgeable, it is useless to talk of "a united front."

In the same way Brockway writes:—

> Participation in the political and industrial sides of the Labour Movement has not been actuated by a sincere belief that through these means a real development can take place towards laying the foundations of the new Socialist Society, but because they offered an opportunity to prepare the psychology of the working class for armed revolution.

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They believe, however, that they see signs of a change taking place. Brailsford goes on:—

> We have good reasons for believing that of late many Communists have come to think—as Marx and Engels thought—that in democratic countries civil war is not the inevitable and necessary method. The French Party has just issued a pamphlet to this effect. If this obstacle can be removed, the ugly doctrine of the Dictatorship must go with it, and unity becomes possible.

The summary of the resolution published declares:—

> British Communists have recently indicated that their conception of "armed revolution" is not a minority armed rising, but action by a Socialist Government to suppress any resistance by the possessing classes.

Similarly Brockway writes:—

> A considerable body of Communists are more and more putting in the background, in countries with "democratic" constitutions, the insistence upon an armed revolution and the necessity to prepare the workers for it, and are concentrating upon an immediate policy to attack Capitalism and Imperialism by political and industrial means.

ON these statements it is necessary to make some comment. Any proposal of working-class unity is welcome; and above all any proposal for immediate or united action is welcome, whatever the differences of wider theory and outlook or even misconceptions there may exist. The Communist International, which originally brought forward the proposal of the United Front (and the United Front, or unity in action on immediate issues, is the only practical form of realising working-class unity at the present stage, while fundamental theoretical and political divergences still exist), has repeatedly declared that it is ready to join hands with its bitterest enemies among the labour leaders, or for the matter of that with the devil himself, provided that will assist in bringing closer together the working masses, at whose head the various leaders stand, in the unity of the actual struggle against capitalism. And this is not for any machiavellian reason, but for the simple certainty that the experience of the struggle will inevitably convince the working class of the correctness of the Communist policy. This incidentally is the reason why the reactionary leaders are opposed to unity. But it is not

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desirable that the approach to unity should be based on illusions which can only make that approach sterile and valueless. The Independent Labour Party wishes to make any approach to unity conditional on the Communist International ceasing to be Communist (much as if the Communist International were to insist as a necessary first condition of any united action that the Independent Labour Party must accept Leninism—" if this difference of opinion is unbridgeable, it is useless to talk of a ' united front ' "). Such an approach suggests a failure yet to consider the elementary conditions of the problem of unity. Unity is not a problem of reconciling and smoothing out irreconcilable differences of outlook in some meaningless common formula; unity is a problem of finding some common ground of immediate action, in spite of admitted and recognised fundamental theoretical differences on all ultimate questions. The theoretical misconceptions of the I.L.P. with regard to Communist policy would be of secondary importance in comparison with the practical issue of immediate united action; but if these theoretical misconceptions are actually made an obstacle to unity, then it is necessary to clear them out of the way.

IN the first place the suggestion that " some Communists," " British Communists," &c., hold certain views which are not Communist, or that the Communist International is " changing " its views and so forth, is a false and foolish method of approach that can lead nowhere, and that only reveals a complete misunderstanding of Communism. What has led these observers astray is the fact that Communism, or Marxism, being scientific, bases itself on the objective situation, and invariably adapts itself to every change in the objective situation—but always methodically, and with the single general aim, in the present epoch, of the complete capture of power by the working class, the complete crushing out of capitalist class power and the building up of the workers' communist social order. The concentration on the immediate seizure of power in 1917-1920 was not due to " revolutionary psychology " as the I.L.P. resolution suggests (it is only the I.L.P. that draws its policy out of its own psychology), but to the conditions of complete

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capitalist break up, which made the moment ripe for the seizure of power in Europe had the proletarian parties been prepared. The Social Democrats chose instead to fight the revolution and concentrate all their efforts on patching up the crazy capitalist system in its rotting post-war shape. Owing to their inherited strength from pre-war conditions they were able to paralyse the action of the proletariat. In consequence, in the present succeeding period of capitalist "stabilisation," the Communist International necessarily concentrates its effort on the task of winning the majority of the working masses for the class struggle in order to be prepared for the inevitable next stage of capitalist break up, when the revolutionary struggle for power will be resumed with improved prospects of success: and the expression of this task of the present period is the United Front. For the fools who can only understand these phenomena in nursery interpretations of "extreme" and "moderate" policies, it may be profitable to consider that the revolutionary Marxists not only vary their policy in relation to each particular period of time, but that at one and the same time the same Marxists vary their policy in relation to different countries at different stages of development, so that at one and the same time the International may be concentrating on the technical tasks of armed struggle in one country, and in some other primitive country declaring that the principle task is to form trade unions. This does not mean however that any country (as the reformists of each country always fondly imagine of their own country, devoutly believing that God has marked their own country as "a special case") is exempt from the general laws of developing class struggle and the inevitable struggle for power, any more than the concentrating at a given moment on some elementary forms of the united front means a "change of mind" on the future task of the armed struggle.

MORE important, however, than these questions of the A B C of Marxist method is the complete confusion which is revealed in these quotations as to the central point at issue—the relationship of Civil War and Mass Struggle. Civil War is isolated by these writers as a kind of

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independent weapon favoured by revolutionaries. "Drop this belief in civil war," they declare, "and we are with you." They have actually twisted themselves into a position in which they declare that they are ready to "accept" the class struggle, but they "reject" civil war. It is, of course, impossible to face the one without facing the other. Once you are in a fight, the choice of weapons depends on circumstances and your adversary. Civil War is simply the final most extreme form of the Class Struggle. Civil War is not a question of choice, as Mr. Brailsford might choose to have marmalade or jam for breakfast. In the words of the First Manifesto of the Communist International "Civil War is *forced upon* the labouring masses by their arch-enemies." The scientific certainty of civil war is based upon the proved certainty that the ruling class does use every weapon on its own behalf. (Whether the point of civil war is reached before or after a parliamentary majority is a secondary formal issue, the decision of which will not rest with the working class.) But this civil war is only the culminating outcome of a whole process of class struggle, and not the subjective choice of certain revolutionaries. The revolutionaries strive for working-class organisation and advance to power, including the facing of the issue of civil war. Civil War is not the antithesis of the Mass Movement, but its culmination.

BUT this union of the organised mass movement of the workers with the revolutionary struggle up to the point of civil war—which union is the very essence of Marxism—leaves the I.L.P. representatives completely helpless and uncomprehending. They have from the outset so filled themselves up with the notion of civil war as a kind of nightmare ambition of certain "impatient" revolutionaries, that when they discover that these same revolutionaries are working away patiently and laboriously at the building up of the workers' mass movement, including the most petty tasks of it and the fight for the most petty demands, they are in a maze and cannot for the life of them reconcile one with the other, simply because they started from a completely wrong understanding. They can only conclude that these revolutionaries are growing "sensible," and they declare:

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"Now swear definitely that you completely renounce this notion of civil war and we can co-operate with you." Not at all. Co-operation by all means on immediate tasks; at the present stage there is still room for those who "reject" civil war to be of use in the constructive tasks of the working-class movement, provided they fight honestly for the immediate demands they can accept. But the issue of civil war will have to be faced, and by them also, if they do not wish to separate presently from the working class.

AND this, finally, is the most important point for the present moment. It is one thing to cherish still the belief that the working class may win without civil war. Such an outlook will inevitably have a demoralising effect even on current work (faith in bourgeois institutions and even in the "good will" of the bourgeoisie—a faith which every time costs dear to the workers). Nevertheless it is possible to help forward in immediate tasks of the working-class movement on which all are agreed despite such an outlook. But to make the future issue of civil war an excuse for not co-operating in the present urgent tasks of the working-class movement is indefensible. What is to prevent co-operation on trade union unity, the workers' alliance, support to colonial workers, the fight against war and fascism and against government repression and reactionary legislation? Certainly to expect theoretical unity and an amalgamation of social democracy and communism, so long as social democracy stands for coalition with capitalism, is a tall order. But then on the grounds of this lofty ideal of unity to refuse the smallest actual step for unity on the most elementary current issues—this is to reverse the whole policy and suggests no desire for unity at all. If the demand for working-class unity is sincere, then that demand must find expression in the United Working Class Front on actual issues. This is the acid test for the Independent Labour Party.

R. P. D.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF MAY DAY

By A. A. PURCELL, M.P.

EVERY year, when the First of May comes round, our movement reacts to it in different ways. There is a general feeling that May Day ought to be celebrated by the Labour movement, and indeed by the working class, as a whole. But in fact, as everybody knows perfectly well, May Day in Britain, is rather a pathetic effort. Only a minute percentage of the organised workers, let alone the masses, cease work on May Day to celebrate the coming emancipation of Labour and to demonstrate their solidarity with their comrades in all lands.

True, we do hold May Day demonstrations, but we evade our responsibilities by shifting these demonstrations to the first Saturday or the first Sunday in May. I know that in many of our great industrial centres this departure from the First of May is difficult to avoid : none the less it is a departure which we should not willingly accept—since it is a departure from the whole original purpose of May Day—and one which we should seek to rectify as soon as we possibly can.

Let us, then, frankly face the fact that we do not celebrate May Day as we should, that we do not celebrate it as do our comrades in many other countries. It is not that our difficulties are greater than theirs. On the contrary : it is the general practice in most countries for May Day demonstrations to be attacked by all the forces of governmental repression, ranging from simple prohibition to the bludgeoning and shooting down of the demonstrators by police, troops, Fascisti and White Guards. Last year, for instance in Fascist Italy, Spain and Hungary, the celebration of May Day was absolutely forbidden. Yet in spite of all, our comrades on the continent and throughout the world, show their courage and *do* demonstrate on May Day ; and it is a common-place to read, in our newspapers, the press telegrams telling us of the savage attacks on, and in many cases the forcible breaking up of, May Day demonstrations abroad.

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Why is it, therefore, that we, British Trade Unionists and workers, do not make a better thing of May Day? We have only to look at the Labour Press each year *after* May Day, to find the opinion variously expressed that there is a great deal lacking in our celebration of May Day, and that something ought to be done about it. But there the matter rests until the next May Day is upon us, and it is too late to do anything except, as previously, complain after the event. Here, I fancy, we come to the root of the question. Unless we have fully considered the question, and made all our preparations, well in advance, then we shall obviously not make a success of May Day. For this reason I welcome the present opportunity to examine briefly the importance of the May Day Celebration that will soon be upon us.

The younger generation in our movement naturally does not remember the early struggles associated with May Day, and to many of the old hands, time has dimmed the memory of these struggles: we find accordingly a general tendency to lose sight of the original purpose of May Day.

The institution of May Day goes back nearly forty years, to the foundation of the Second International in 1889. In that year the Socialist Parties, which had grown up in the various countries after the collapse of the First International (following the bloody suppression of the Paris Commune in '71), met together in Congress at Paris. They re-formed the International but they did something else. They resolved that each year on an appointed day the workers should strike work and should come out on the streets in great demonstrations, not to celebrate past glories, but as a token of their future emancipation. The day appointed was the traditional Labour Day—the First of May.

From the first, May Day has been, not in any sense merely a holiday, but a day of struggle. It is a day when the working class, while still in the chains of capitalism, looks forward to the time, growing ever nearer, when it shall have struck off those chains for ever: a day when the working class pledges itself to carry on the fight unremittingly until it has won its own freedom, which is at the same time the freedom of the whole of humanity.

In 1889 the institution of May Day was closely linked with the struggle for the shortening of the working day—for the

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eight-hour day. That struggle has remained, and should remain in the forefront of our May Day demonstrations. At the present moment, with the eight-hour day vanished under the employers' attack in many countries, there is more need than ever to keep this question well to the fore. Let us not forget the sixty-year-old resolution of the First International :—

> "The limitation of the working-day is a preliminary condition without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive."

Here I think it is necessary to say that we cannot be content with a mere legal recognition of the forty-eight-hour week or the eight-hour day. In the first place because legal recognition provides no more security in the case of working hours than it has done in the case of the Factory Acts; that is to say, legal recognition is as strong as the strength of the workers makes it. In the second place because simply to talk of the eight-hour day or the forty-eight-hour week *as such*, is puerile. What we are aiming at is such a reduction of the hours of labour as will enable everyone ready and willing to work to be employed—a reduction that will absorb the unemployed.

I can recall the time, when, in 1893, I took part in the propagandist activity of a body called the International Legal Eight-Hours League, one of whose leading figures was Marx's daughter Eleanor Marx-Aveling. In 1894, I remember, we sent a deputation to Gladstone, then prime minister, urging that the Government should support the introduction of the eight-hour day. The answer he returned was that the Government would adopt our proposal as soon as the people favoured it. Much water has flowed under the bridges since then—and yet we are still having to fight for a shorter working day.

Washington Conventions may establish the eight-hour day —on paper—and the International Labour Office holds conference after conference, but the workers gain no benefit. Indeed the standards to which the I.L.O. may secure the agreement of governments and employers become a very potent weapon against the workers—the *minimum* standard that they set up soon becomes a *maximum*. Against the impotence of the I.L.O.—an impotence arising not out of ill-will, but out of the very constitution of that

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body—we must offset the international unity of the working class.

This brings us to the second main slogan of our May Day fight—the All-Inclusive Trade Union International called for by the Scarborough Congress. This is really the fundamental demand, for without it there can be no successful struggle for the shorter working day. Nor can there be any successful fight for our third slogan—the securing of a minimum standard of living which pays full regard to the permanent betterment of the workers, and which recognises that there can be no satisfactory minimum without a full measure of workers' control.

Our fourth slogan is the defence of Workers in Russia—where the eight-hour day, and the six-hour day in some industries, is secured by the law of the Workers' State, and where the labour standards are, considering all the circumstances, the highest in the world. To this we may add the defence of those countries, such as China, which are the victims of imperialist aggression.

And, to conclude, can we, dare we, on May Day forget the capitalist repression which has struck down thousands of our brothers in Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Serbia, aye, and in Britain itself, " democratic " Britain ? We must on May Day show our solidarity with these comrades, particularly the twelve in Wandsworth and the anthracite miners. Their imprisonment by the forces of capitalism is a menace to us all, and one against which on May Day, of all days, we must organise a mighty protest, and a straightforward demand for their immediate release.

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GREAT BRITAIN, THE CONTINENT AND RUSSIA

By P. J. SCHMIDT

[*We have pleasure in printing the following article from Mr. P. J. Schmidt, who is a leading figure in the Dutch Social Democratic and Trade Union Movement, the editor of* "Eenheid" (*Unity*), *Amsterdam, and chief of the Publications and Research Department of the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions. This article shows that there is developing a strong left tendency in Social Democracy and Trade Unions on the Continent in response to the left lead of the British Trade Unions. The importance of this needs no exaggeration. The British working-class movement will send hearty greetings to the Left Wing in their struggle against reactionary leadership and policies in the Labour Movement.—Editor*, LABOUR MONTHLY.]

THE Labour Movement of Great Britain has made enormous progress, socially and mentally. Since the war, it has strengthened its position politically and industrially. It has gained considerable influence in national affairs, and—which seems even more important—it has increased its *international* prestige to such an extent that it may at present claim to belong to the vanguard of the international socialist movement. The word "Socialism" now sounds familiar in the ears of a great part of the British public. And the British rank and file of to-day has become what we term "class-conscious."

This rapid and striking development of the British organised working class has taken many a Continental socialist and trade-unionist by surprise. Although they are "trained in the school of Karl Marx," they seem to find it extremely difficult to apply in this case the elementary principles of the Marxian method of analysis; a method which would have shown them a safe way through the tangle of facts and figures, decisions and resolutions, words and deeds blowing across the Channel to the Continent. By applying that method, they might even have discovered why

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it is that the British movement takes to the "Left," and why it is that the main point of Labour's activity now chiefly rests with the formerly "conservative" trade-union movement. They have probably forgotten "how to do it"—for even now, after years of writing, explaining, studying and deliberating, some of our Continental friends insist upon saying the most blundering nonsense about the British Labour movement and its organisations. The "note comique" of this case appears in statements made by the same Continental friends, to the effect "that our British comrades know so little about Continental affairs." That may also be true to some extent. But here we can properly apply the old saying: he sees the mote in his brother's eye, but not the beam in his own!

During all these thrilling deliberations on the position, the outlook, the activity and the future of the British movement, the question was almost neglected: *What about ourselves?* Are there any facts in the development of the Continental movement that are worth while looking at, and that may perhaps, make it easier to understand the changes in England? Indeed, that question is of vital importance for all Continental socialists. *For, while the British movement on the whole went solidly and rapidly ahead in outlook and mentality, a part of the Continental movement went distinctly backwards.* Where the English are standing now, many a Continental socialist party stood before the war. And *vice versa.* And as so many socialists on the Continent (I mean, of course, prominent socialists) have forgotten, simply and entirely *forgotten* their past—how should they be able, how could they be *willing* to understand the British movement of to-day?

It is an impossible task to sketch, within the limited space of this article, the history of the Continental movement during the last twenty years. I will merely try to put the position in general as it was before the war and as it is to-day.

The Policy of Coalition

The socialist political parties on the Continent were established at the time of relatively slow development of the major industries. Only the first symptoms of the hyper-modern industrial growth (trusts, cartels, concerns) could be noticed on the European

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Continent. At that time the workers felt more *directly* the tyranny of private undertakings. They were looking for a power that could protect their conditions of working life against the excrescences of private enterprise. They set their hopes on Parliament, where the laws were made, where the necessary social protection could be gained. Parliament seemed to them an all-dominating power. Universal suffrage and a strong independent workers' party in parliament—that was the preliminary practical purpose of the socialist political parties.

At about the same time the trade unions came up, organised and managed on a "modern" basis. Their task was positively limited to looking after wages and working conditions. Occasional co-operation with the Socialist parties did not prevent both organisations from safeguarding, entirely and carefully, their "independence." In fact, the trade unions strongly objected to be called "socialist" or "social-democratic" organisations.

That was before the war. And along these lines the movement went rather normally and slowly ahead.

But—it cannot be said too often—war and revolutions brought fundamental changes. The coming up of gigantic industrial concerns—also in countries which did not know of the feverish influence of "war-industry"—created something like a sensation, not only in the world of industry, but also in the minds and outlook of the workers. In countries, where this shattering development was not accompanied by political revolution, parliamentary institutions did not take much trouble to keep pace with the demands of the new time. Of course, under pressure of the threatening revolution, under pressure of the awakening spirit of revolt among the workers, many a parliament granted, *nolens volens*, concessions to the workers in the field of social legislation and political reform. Indeed, in 1918 and 1919 the workers could record more gains than in the preceding twenty-five years of parliamentary deliberations. But soon reaction came and, in the years that followed, the same good old parliaments were used by the employers and the employers' parties to nullify, bit by bit, the gains of 1918-19. And, at present, the workers on the European Continent have to fight all they can to maintain what is left of their eight-hour day.

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Thirty, even ten, years ago Parliament appeared to be the Great Power which would be able to protect the workers against capitalist tyranny. The irony of modern political and industrial evolution has seen to it, however, that—while the workers' parties in Parliament takeup much stronger positions than before the war—Parliament has now first of all to protect *itself* against the ever increasing domination of industrial powers, which have grown far beyond the parliamentary sphere of influence.

Of these striking facts, the majority of Continental socialist parties failed to draw the proper consequences. While slowly increasing their number of seats in Parliament, their policy has, since the war, practically been based on the possibilities of *coalitions*, of co-operation with the bourgeoisie. Now, one can hardly object to *incidental* co-operation with "left-wing" capitalist parties, if the interests of the workers demand it. Even those of us (including the writer) who do not expect the least value from that incidental co-operation with bourgeois-parties (either Catholic "workers" parties or liberal "intellectuals") cannot reject it for all times and all circumstances. But every sincere socialist should object very strongly *to this policy being made the leading and dominating issue of the workers' fight for Socialism.* And it seems that it has now gone so far that some Continental socialist parties are willing to stop action outside Parliament, to withdraw from the front troops in the class-struggle, for the sake of "safeguarding" their coalition policy, for the sake of mixed Government. The Continental parties, on the whole, have made a definite swing to the Right.[1]

We, in Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, etc., do not possess a party like your I.L.P. which under young and enthusiastic leadership is one of the freshest and keenest parties of the Second International—a party which boldly states that

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[1] Here, and on the other pages, we must exclude entirely *Austria* and to some extent also the socialist parties of the *Scandinavian* countries. The Austrian party under the inspiring leadership of Otto Bauer, forms a bright spot on the Continent, and their *Arbeiter Zeitung* is undoubtedly one of the best socialist *dailies* in the world.

While talking about "the Continent" we should always bear in mind that sometimes the difference between two "Continental" countries is very much greater than between one particular Continental country and England

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it has set before itself "*the object of winning Socialism for this generation.*" We have not a LABOUR MONTHLY nor a *New Leader*. And even *Die Gesellschaft*, perhaps the best Continental Socialist magazine (Austria excluded again) would not think of printing on its cover what the *Socialist Review* did on the cover of its February issue :—

> It will be said that to attempt without postponement or compromise this profound transformation, is to pursue a policy of revolution. In a sense it is. But if this is to be revolutionary, then the *Socialist Review* aspires to be the most revolutionary newspaper in the country.

"Without postponement or compromise ?" "Re-vo-lution ?" But that is exactly what our "Marxists" said before the war ! They have forgotten it. They do not believe in it any more. They are absorbed in parliamentary "work," *i.e.* grouping and re-grouping, considering and re-considering, for maintaining present coalitions or creating future alliances with "Left-wing" anti-socialist parties. Besides they have grown old and tired and wise, oh, very, very wise ! The thundering noise of modern forces either makes them hesitate, or frightens them. They do not dare to listen to it. They prefer to close both eyes and both ears. Tell them, that you want action, agitation ; talk to them on revolution, on ardent, united fighting ; say that you want the above statement of the I.L.P. printed on the cover of their official monthly ; point out the increasing power and concentration of the employers, together with the changed position of Europe in the world-market ; refer to the problems of the Far East and the millions of workers, who are on the point of offering (or have already sold) their disastrously cheap labour to Western and American employers. And *if* they listen to you, they will say : "Oh, young man, we have heard all that before," or, what is worse : "Don't bother, it will last our time."

I know you have men in your British Labour Party, who enjoy talking on class-peace, co-operation, etc. But they form an ever decreasing minority, and they confine their propaganda to dinner-party speeches. They fail to exert the influence and to get the support necessary for forcing their personal taste as a policy on the British Labour Movement. And there—we sincerely congratulate you !

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The Trade Unions

The Continental *trade union* movement, too, went through a period of growth, and changes in position and outlook. And, again, our Continental party-leaders were taken by surprise; again they failed to apply that Marxian method which they had been applying so successfully before the war.

It is an undeniable fact that, to-day, political influences play a much more prominent part in the modern industrial development than thirty or forty years ago, when the Socialist parties on the Continent were established. It is also an undeniable fact that in politics of to-day modern industrial forces play even a dominating part. If you cannot or will not see that, you can, of course, realise neither the thorough and principal changes in the position of the trade union movement.

Modern times have practically effaced the traditional frontiers between "purely" industrial and "purely" political matters. The trade union claims for higher wages, better working conditions cannot be efficiently dealt with on a limited scale. Miners' wages are now narrowly connected with the whole problem of reorganising the industry—not merely from a national, but also from an international point of view. Again, the *living wage* policy (a typical "trade union matter"), advocated by the I.L.P., is positively and directly connected with *socialisation*. And socialisation touches upon the whole complex of problems, both politically and industrially. And so on. As a matter of fact, the leading issues of the socialist parties—disarmament, works' councils, socialisation—are now the leading issues of the trade unions as well, also on the Continent.

That the trade unions *had* to move forward as rapidly and thoroughly as industrial life itself—has not been realised by the majority of Continental socialist leaders, and not even by a part of the trade union leaders themselves. Many of them stick to their opinions that politics are "taboo" for trade unions. And they are the more willing to stick to that, because of fear of "domination" by the trade union leaders, who are now at the head of organisations, far better in spirit, and far better in management than most Socialist political parties.

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British readers will see at once the importance of this point, when they bear in mind that in Germany, Switzerland, France, Holland and other Continental countries, a co-ordinating body, such as the British *Labour Party*, does not exist, and that—contrary to British historic events—the *socialist parties* are foremost in strongly objecting to such a co-ordinating body being created.

Under these circumstances it is obvious that the trade unions on the Continent, generally speaking, are more willing to move to the Left, more keen to see things on a broad basis, than the Socialist parties. The significance of this change will be more appreciated, when we remind the reader of the fact that, in 1905, the German trade unions rejected the general strike, while the socialist party, lead by Bebel, accepted that weapon of the working class with great enthusiasm ; and at the same time socialist papers accused the unions of being " in no way a class-movement, but a workers' aristocracy." In Germany of *to-day*, the *socialist party* has its great doubts about that sort of " non-parliamentary " action, while the *trade unions* made the " Kapp-Pustch " a failure, by organised mass-action !

Although there are many symptoms of this new sentiment within the trade unions, we may not feel too optimistic about it. The traditional dominating influence of socialist politicians on the trade unions has not had its full effect yet !

Attitude towards Russia

It is especially in the Russian question that the greater part of Continental socialists and trade union leaders of the old school (or must I say the " new " school ?) have absolutely failed to understand the British point of view.

Apart from everything that has been said on the matter, it is rather painful to discover that the same men, who had always been hoping, as they said, that the British movement one day or another would develop into a genuine socialist movement and would turn towards " internationalism "—that these very men, instead of welcoming the new spirit in England with the greatest joy and satisfaction, are now indulging themselves with all kinds of sophistic arguments to reduce the importance of one of the most magnificent events in the recent history of the working class : *the*

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awakening of socialist class-consciousness and socialist idealism throughout the British labour movement.

After all, this is not as strange as it is painful. Practically all problems of the international labour movement are, directly or indirectly, grouped around *Russia*, the Russian Soviet-Republic and the Russian revolution. And if we know the attitude of continental socialists towards Russia, we know at the same time, why they are so sceptical towards the recent developments in England.

Frankly speaking, the attitude towards Russia of a great part of Continental Socialists and trade union leaders, even at the present time, is very much like that of the politicians and historians in the middle and at the end of the former century, who used to frighten their well-to-do citizens with uncomfortable tales of the French revolution and more particularly of the deeds of those "blood-hounds" Robespierre, Danton, Marat. Even *Karl Kautsky*, that famous Marxian scholar, who published so many inspiring revolutionary documents, now sides with those who look at "revolution" as being a synonym of "crime" and "robbery"; and he would not mind assisting in the preparation of armed revolt against the bolshevist regime.[1] And if we, who never closed our eyes to the many points where Bolshevism failed, and who never held back our criticism when we thought they were wrong—if we dare to point out with *Mr. H. N. Brailsford* that "the Russian leaders, in 1917, gave proof of a daring which amounted to genius," and that this revolution is "one of the greatest exploits of the human will"[2] —or if we dare to stand with all our enthusiasm behind *Otto Bauer*, when he says: "whatever may divide us from the Bolshevists, we must maintain complete solidarity with Russia in the face of capitalist acts of hostility"[3]—if we dare to take that course, many of our leaders on this side of the Channel are at once ready to accuse us of being "cell-builders," "agents of Russia" and the like. Here, in this bright and home-like capital of the Netherlands, it has even come so far, that a prominent leader wanted to dissolve a debating-club where Mr. Purcell had been speaking on Russia.

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[1] Karl Kautsky: *Die Internationale und Sowjet-Russland.*"
[2] *The New Leader*, November 6, 1925.
[3] *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Vienna, December 22, 1925.

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And at the same time it was publicly suggested that the editors of the newly established *Unity* paper should be expelled from the party !

I feel sure that many a reader of THE LABOUR MONTHLY will describe this attitude as sheer madness. And there he is right. But let us not for a moment forget that this attitude is indissolubly connected with the whole present-day political outlook of these Continental socialist leaders. If you are following a policy of " reconciliation " and " coalition " with statesmen of the opposite class *at home*, you will quite naturally turn to the same thing *abroad*. So, many of our Continental leaders showed great enthusiasm for the Dawes Scheme and the Locarno Treaties. They call M. Briand —the man who brutally turned down Captain Gordon Canning's attempt for fresh negotiations with Abd-el-Krim—" one of the most devoted friends of peace." They applaud Sir Austen Chamberlain, who is pursuing a most dangerous and intriguing policy in the East, and whose colleague, Mr. Churchill (did not the late H. W. Massingham describe him as " The Man of Blood " ?), calls Socialists " softies " and " fatheads." If one has been cheering and applauding men like those, one can hardly be expected to find an opportunity of reconciliation with the Russian revolutionary leaders, can one ?

Ever since 1920, much has been said about the trouble that the bolshevist policy has been causing in Continental workers' organisations. No doubt the Russian policy, in this respect, has been an absolute failure. They have made very grave mistakes, and an immense harm has been done by the creation of the " Red " Trade Union International.

Fortunately, symptoms can be noticed of a change in the Russian policy with regard to the Continental organisations. But that is not enough. We want to see also symptoms *of a change in the Continental Socialist and trade union attitude towards Russia*. For our Continental socialists have made very grave mistakes, too.

We could refer to what we stated above about their attitude in general, and further we could remind the reader of the fact that many Continental Socialist papers have ardently supported the

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Capitalist Press in its actions against Soviet Russia, by publishing the bad news and by purposely concealing the favourable information. In addition to this, I just want to give one very actual and striking example concerning the grave accusations made by Continental socialists against Communists, in the ever burning question of the failure of the German revolution. Socialist leaders on the Continent never got tired of shouting in the ears of all who were willing to listen that the failure of the German revolution was due to the Communists, who broke the unity of the German workers. Some months ago, however, at the occasion of the Perlach murder case, where *Noske*, the Socialist "Reichswehr-minister" of the revolution days, had to give evidence, the question of that failure came once more into the foreground. And the official organ of the Austrian social-democratic party, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (January 21, 1926), summing up the case in a leading article, stated that *Noske*, the social-democrat, *was more than anyone else responsible for destroying the Unity of the German workers and for the failure of the German revolution.*

These things, which can be said to-day without causing a storm of indignation among Continental Socialist leaders, mean, together with other recent statements, that also in Continental socialist circles, especially among some of the younger trade union leaders, symptoms of a change in outlook can be noticed. If you, readers of THE LABOUR MONTHLY, find this no reason for optimism, I must ask you to keep in mind that you—compared with the situation in various Continental countries—form a "left wing" in a *Left* movement!

Indeed the possibility of a *rapprochement* in the near future is coming nearer every day. We, Continental socialists and trade unionists of the Left, are sincerely trying to further that movement. We may be still weak in number, but we are growing day by day. Lately, we have been able to get into contact with each other, and we will do all we can to maintain and strengthen that contact. "Unity" papers are now established in Belgium, Germany and Holland, while the publication of pamphlets in four languages is under consideration. We want to concentrate first of all our attention on unity with Russia. Not only for organisational reasons. For we want fresh blood, fresh life, fresh

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actions in our Continental movement. One united international movement is vitally necessary, but within that movement we want freedom of speech and freedom of criticism. And our Left wing could not be better supported, we believe, than by the Russians entering our Internationals.

After the things I have said on the Socialist political parties and the trade unions, it will be obvious that we have set our hopes first of all on the trade unions. And it will be obvious, too, that we, under these circumstances, sincerely admire the British movement for the bold stand it takes in the cause of international unity.

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TROTSKY AND HIS ENGLISH CRITICS[1]

By R. PALME DUTT

NO one would guess from reading the reviews of Trotsky's book that it is a serious piece of work. However, it is. From the reviews the book might be considered to consist mainly of brilliant wit, revolutionary romance from a Russian who has never ventured beyond the borders of Russia, and malicious personalities. Actually the book is an objective estimate of the English situation, rapid, but carried out with a sure hand ; and the polemic is strictly subordinate to the objective argument.

A word must be said at the outset on the common plea that Trotsky " knows nothing of England " (the threadbare escape of every single reformist reviewer to avoid having to meet Trotsky's merciless argument). It would be more true to say that his critics know nothing of England—a charge that could be substantiated by every single statement of the reformist school for the past fifty years. Trotsky himself points out that

> For decades the " leaders " of the British working class considered that an independent Labour Party was the mournful privilege of continental Europe. Not a trace is left to-day of that naive and doltish self-conceit. The proletariat has forced the trade unions to create an independent party. But the matter will not rest there. The Liberal and semi-Liberal leaders of the Labour Party still think that the social revolution is the mournful privilege of the European continent. And their backwardness will be revealed by events.

In fact, Trotsky is able justly to claim and substantiate that " we Marxians understand the tempo of development of the British Labour Movement and foresee its morrow much better than do the present ' theoreticians ' of the Labour Party. The call of the ancient philosophy to ' know thyself ' has not rung in their ears."

This self-ignorance of the reformist idealist school, which is so naively exposed in their reviews of Trotsky and their " British " repudiations of his " Russian " standpoint, can be illustrated in a very simple form. A challenge may safely be issued to the critics

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1 *Where is Britain Going ?* By L. TROTSKY. With an Introduction by H. N. BRAILSFORD. (Allen & Unwin. 2s. 6d.)

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to name a single book by a single English author or politician, bourgeois or labour leader, which is as close to the essentials of the English situation as Trotsky's book. It cannot be done. And yet Trotsky is admittedly a busy man, for whom the English situation is only one factor in a complex of problems ; his sketch could obviously be improved and amplified by fuller study, knowledge, contact, &c.; these English authors have abundance of time (for their narrow horizon England is usually the world), copious information, contact on the spot and all the rest of it. Nevertheless there is none. And why not? The reason goes to the heart of the English situation. The expressions and books produced in England about English questions are all marked by the same subjective unscientific character, the same insular ignorance and unconsciousness (*My Ideals for Labour*, *Ethics of Empire*, *England's Awakening*, *The Future of Citizenship*, *Creative Socialism*, and all the rest of the dreary crew). In other words they are all "idealist," that is, unable to deal with the facts of the social process in their actual movement, unable to think dialectically. There is no social scientific, *i.e.* Marxist, school in England yet ; a fact which reflects the immaturity of the working class movement and the overpowering weight of the past bourgeois tradition. As Trotsky points out, the same conditions which gave England priority in the past make for backwardness in every sphere to-day. English Capitalism was the pioneer in the past, empirically finding out a way. This fact has stamped a deeply empirical character on English thought, and a contempt for all non-English thought and methods. To-day this traditional outlook has been inherited by the English labour leaders from the bourgeoisie just at a time when its foundation in fact has completely disappeared, and when England most needs to learn from the development of world scientific thought.

The notion that Trotsky is unfit to write on England because he is not an Englishman is a piece of abysmal national ignorance and self-conceit. It would be as sensible to argue that Marx could not write on "Capital" because he was not a capitalist. In point of fact, the best view of cheesemites at the end of a microscope is not necessarily at the cheesemites' end. When the critics proudly put Trotsky right on some irrelevant point of

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detail (and in nine cases out of ten they are wrong even in their facts, and merely misunderstanding Trotsky's point),[2] they are only giving a measure of their own smallness. In short, the cheesemites are showing that they are cheesemites. Certainly the scientific handling needs, when we are concerned with the living problems of the class struggle, to be carried beyond a treatment of principles, and to be realised, elaborated and worked out in closest relation to the fullest living information, experience and action. But to imagine that the important thing is the possession of details of local information (which fifty million Englishmen have had for a generation without being any the wiser), and not the scientific handling, is childishness.

With this prelude we may come to Trotsky's analysis of the English situation.

Trotsky argues that England has reached a turning point at which no further capitalist development is possible, and the only

[2] One or two examples may be given of these corrections of Trotsky's " ignorance." (1) Johnston takes as his principal proof of the falsity of Trotsky's facts the statement that Macdonald operated in the realm of diplomacy with the aid of false documents." This is a simple question of history. MacDonald was responsible head of the Foreign Office when it issued the Zinoviev forgery ; he wrote and amended with his own hand the note utilising the forgery ; he never repudiated the issue of the forgery ; and he has never apologised for it since. In the light of these facts Johnston's ingenuous plea that " MacDonald did not operate the Zinoviev letter ; it was operated against him " (which, even if it were true, would make of the Leader of the Labour Party an innocent baby unfit to be left in charge of a halfpennyworth of working class interests among the foxes of the bourgeoisie—and MacDonald is not entirely an innocent baby) makes no difference to the historical facts. The constitutional, legal and political responsibility for the Zinoviev forgery rests solely with MacDonald, and cannot be lifted by his lackeys on to any other shoulders. (2) Brailsford, Russell and others complain that Trotsky dares to suggest that the English electoral districts are weighted in favour of the Conservatives. Yet this is notoriously so, although the extent may be a matter for discussion. The agricultural districts, which are the Conservative strongholds, are heavily over-represented by the apportionment of electoral districts ; and in addition there are the University seats, bogus " City " and " Exchange " constituences, &c. Compare Dalton in the March *Socialist Review:* " Broadly, the industrial vote predominates in more than 400 constituencies, the agricultural in less than 200. . . . In the country as a whole, the agricultural areas are over-represented in relation to their electorates." This overweighting of agriculture —in industrial England—is a significant evidence of the reactionary character of the whole electoral system in England.

The same will be found to be the case with most of the other points raised, if subjected to closer analysis. The superficiality rests with the critics, who are startled at unsuspected angles of vision turned on to the conventional hypocritical bourgeois picture of events and conditions in England.

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path forward is along the lines of Socialist reorganisation. This conception needs understanding correctly, as it is the basis of the whole argument. The decline of English Capitalism dates back for forty years, since the development of the more scientifically organised German and later American industry, and was already diagnosed by Engels in its main lines in 1885. This decline was partially veiled by the Imperialist expansion of the past forty years, which was in reality accelerating the decline, although giving an artificial appearance of prosperity. It is only the war and the post war period that has carried forward the whole process at a tremendous pace, and now laid bare to all the point of open decline reached and the emergence of new world forces. American industrial and financial preponderance, which grows more exacting and dominating each year; the centrifugal forces of the Empire and growth of the Dominions to an independent capitalist policy; the revolutionising and struggle to independence of the colonial and semi-colonial nations, which afforded the indispensable basis of English capitalist industry and exploitation; the loss of strategic immunity and sea power; the strangling weight of debt, inflated capital, and long continued accumulation; the historic disorganisation of industry and failure of development: all these are factors not affected by unbased hopes of a possible "revival of trade" (as if it were only a question of the ups and downs of "normal" capitalism); they are contradictions which no capitalist statesman can solve, because the economic reorganisation which alone can solve them, cannot be accomplished without cutting across the whole historic tangle of private property interests and legal rights which stand in the way. This is why only a revolution can solve the English situation: a legal transformation is not in practice possible, because the whole existing legal state framework and machine is in practice bound up with the maintenance of existing property rights.

What is the character of this revolution? It is here that comes the second essential point of Trotsky's argument. A political revolution is the necessary preliminary of carrying out the economic reorganisation. This point is the key to Trotsky's book: for the first point—the basic necessity of a unitary economic reorganisation on the lines of the social organisation of production

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—is beginning in varying degrees to be understood. But the economic reorganisation cannot take place so long as power is in the hands of the capitalist class ; since the capitalist class will not carry out their own extinction. The economic reorganisation can only be carried out when power is in the hands of the working class, whose existence and future is bound up with the social organisation of production. The revolutionary conception is commonly treated in the vulgar bourgeois and reformist writers as the conception of a " sudden " transition to a socialist economy. This of course is nonsense, as the transition to a full socialist economy is a heavy process, involving many stages. But the reorganisation cannot begin until class power is changed : this is the essence of the revolutionary conception. Trotsky shows how the bourgeois political revolution of the seventeenth century (itself the outcome of the gradual rise of the bourgeoisie within the preceding state) was the necessary preliminary of the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century and the consequent full flourishing of capitalism. In the same way the working class has to win power into its own hands now. This is not accomplished by the sham of a " Socialist " ministry within the existing system, which in itself is no more than a cover for capitalist power. The actual transference means that the working class apparatus has to become the ruling apparatus throughout the country. This involves the certainty of struggle and civil war with the existing ruling capitalist class, which has already shown by its action all over the world that it will use all its resources to maintain itself by every means without limit. In comparison with the certainty of this struggle, for which the working class must prepare, the question of parliamentary right in relation to it is absolutely secondary, and, if allowed to occupy the foreground, even to the extent of hoping to avoid the struggle, is a deluding and disarming of the workers and a guaranteeing of capitalist armed power.

This brings us to the third stage in Trotsky's argument—the working class movement in England, and its readiness for the future struggle. This is the central issue of the whole argument. A revolution that involves an actual transference of class power cannot be carried out by the working class without absolute clearness and determination of leadership, freedom from depend-

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ence on bourgeois ideology, and strong central organisation—in other words, a revolutionary mass party, leading the workers to the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. These conditions do not yet exist in the English working class, and this weakness in the subjective readiness of the workers is the retarding fact in the development of the English situation. What is the explanation of this, and what is the line of development? What are the traditions and forces that stand in the way? Here Trotsky brings to bear all his wealth of polemical power and analysis to shatter the existing confusion, cant and humbug of the ruling leadership and ideology in the existing Labour Movement, and to show the workers the plain path forward.

The existing leadership in the Labour Movement is the inheritor of the Liberal, that is of the bourgeois tradition from the time of secure capitalist supremacy. All its outlook is bounded by the capitalist framework, by the permitted legal forms of parliamentary and trade union activity. All its beliefs are the echo of capitalism; of the bourgeois national tradition, of Protestant Christianity, of the sanctity of the Empire, of the sinfulness of revolution, of the necessity of very gradual change, of the unity of classes and all the other cults which Capitalism has laboured to instil into the workers. The more conscious elements of this leadership, the Right Wing, work in direct co-operation with the capitalists. The more confused elements, the centre and so-called left, combine occasional verbal hankerings after socialism, with subordination in practice to the same policy and ideology. Repeated episodes show that the basic ideology of all is the same (Trotsky groups it collectively as Fabianism), and that the differences are still only differences of sentiment and phrase, of responsibility in the governmental sense and irresponsibility.

But this leadership is in complete conflict with the whole existing development of events, and with the development of the working class. Capitalism is no longer ascending, but descending; and there is therefore no longer any room for Liberalism. The capitalist class can no longer make concessions, but must cut the conditions of the workers; in consequence is no longer driven in a progressive direction by the fear of revolution, but in the opposite; develops increasingly to Conservatism, to

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police repression, to Fascism. On the other hand the workers are driven to more and more revolutionary struggle ; first to maintain their conditions, and then, as this becomes more and more visibly impossible in the existing capitalist situation, to the political struggle for power. The revolutionary pressure of the workers throws up into existence the Labour Party against all the opposition of the old Liberal leaders. But the Labour Party is only a stage in the process. As certainly, the workers will throw off the old Liberal leadership, and find revolutionary leadership. And the form of this process will be the transition from the leadership of the Independent Labour Party to the leadership of the Communist Party.

This struggle for emancipation demands a break with the old traditions that still tie the workers to the leading strings of the bourgeoisie. Therefore Trotsky delivers the full force of his assault on these traditions ; and this assault is an essential part of the attack on capitalism in England. These traditions or conceptions to which Trotsky returns again and again, may be summed up under four heads : (1) Religion ; (2) Pacifism ; (3) Parliamentary Democracy ; and (4) Gradualism. All these, when analysed, reduce in the end to one thing : submission to the ruling class.

The attack on Religion has been widely misunderstood. Protestant religion has been the principal form in England for the transmission of bourgeois influence to the working class. Religion seeks to blur all class distinctions in a fictitious spiritual " brotherhood " alongside actual material relations of inequality and exploitation, and has therefore been the invariable weapon of an exploiting class. Religion is the negation of science, and therefore enslaves the mind, destroying mental clearness and honesty, and replacing revolutionary realism by illusion, fables and aspirations. For this reason the revolutionary working-class movement, fighting on a scientific basis, necessarily combats Religion, not only as an organised social force, but also as an individual ideology.

Nothing more completely exposes the mental stage of development of the Fabian Socialists than the universal disapproval and disagreement that Trotsky's attack on Religion in the Labour

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Movement has aroused. It is not merely that such an attack is repudiated by every reformist critic (even Russell the philosopher, while agreeing with the attack on "organised religion," comes out with the old vicious social democratic distinction that "personal religion is a private matter"—without seeing that this is precisely what Trotsky is attacking). It is that Trotsky's attack has actually to be "explained away" by the solemn statement that he, Trotsky (with his abundant West European and American experience) can only be thinking of—the Old Russian Orthodox Eastern Church! This is a truly comic failure of Malvolio to recognise himself. Every page of Trotsky's book shows that he is thinking precisely of that ethical Protestant, Puritan, musty, dusty hymn-singing Christianity which was the basis of the old Liberal Party yesterday and of the upper sections of the Labour Movement to-day, and which, despite all its sham "democratic" pretensions, has always been the sheet-anchor of the Lloyd Georges and MacDonalds and all that is canting and reactionary in politics for the degradation of the workers and their enslavement. Nevertheless Brailsford, who ought to know enough at least of the facts of Marxism to know better, comes out with this foolish fable—which is solemnly repeated after him by all the scribes—and goes on to talk of Trotsky's failure to understand the "free" and "democratic" traditions of "English religion": "Would Trotsky's conviction that Protestant religion is necessarily a 'bourgeois' creed which no worker can honestly profess (what a pitiful and disingenuous parody of Trotsky's argument! Plenty of workers have 'honestly professed' Liberalism, which was none the less a bourgeois creed) survive a visit to a dissenting chapel in a mining district?" To which the answer is that precisely in the mining districts the principal battle has notoriously been in case after case between Religious Revivalism with its ally Spiritualism on the one hand and the Revolution and Communism on the other.[3]

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[3] The most complete and pathetic misunderstanding of the whole issue of Religion and Materialism is expressed by Lansbury:

> "As I understand our comrade, he bases his whole philosophy of life on materialism. Well: he may be right, but my experience is that when men or women join our movement purely and simply because they think it is going to

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What of Pacifism and Capitalist Democracy? Both are, on analysis, hypocritical forms of submission to the ruling class. Pacifism soon becomes entangled in an impossible network of *distinctions between permissible and impermissible force*, which in practice bases itself on one simple criterion—the bourgeois criminal code. In grosser forms (MacDonald, Ponsonby, etc.) Pacifism supports the armed forces of the Capitalist State and imperialist repression, the guns, tanks and cruisers of the bloody capitalist order; and only preaches submission and non-resistance to the workers and subject peoples. In subtler, more refined forms, the ugly contrast is veiled beneath phrases of centrist irresponsibility ("against all force"), but the practical basis remains the police Capitalist State. The same is true of Capitalist Democracy. It is soon found that there is very little democracy in Capitalist Democracy; and that the preaching of submission to Capitalist Democracy means, not submission to the ideal principle of democracy (in that case, the House of Commons, which legislates for 400 millions on a basis of one elector to eight colonial slaves, would have no claim to authority) but submission to the existing legal apparatus of the bourgeoisie, and the obedient *attempt to pass through whatever "asses' gate" the bourgeoisie* choose to set as the only permitted path to proletarian freedom. Pacificism and Capitalist Democracy are in fact fine phrases which mean in reality the slavery of the working class.

"Gradualism" is subjected to a no less severe analysis. It is not difficult to see that "gradualism," as soon as it is examined, disappears into a phrase meaning nothing at all save that progress must be slow, *i.e.* a catchphrase for the maintenance of the existing order. Its bombastic pseudo-scientific pretensions have no foundation either in fact, experience or in real science. It is an arbitrary and illegitimate jump from the conception of Evolution, *i.e.* of development, which is the basis of scientific thinking, to the conception that Evolution contains no leaps or conflicts, which is contrary to all the facts of nature and experience. The whole opposition of "Evolution" and "Revolution" is childish and

bring them individually a better life, they very soon find their way into the other camp."

It is a shame that his staff, who should know some scraps of Marxism, should have been so malicious as to let this pass.

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meaningless. "Evolution" leads to "Revolution," and "Revolution" is a part of "Evolution." Trotsky has no difficulty in showing that even in the plant and animal world (from which the obsolete MacDonald type of preachers profess to draw their social wisdom !) the accumulation of gradual changes leads up to the necessity of sharp transformation or conflict : the butterfly bursts forth from the chrysalis ; the chicken has to smash the prison of its egg. Much more so in the social world of human development, where the factors are so much more complex as to render biological metaphors worthless child's-play, and where the consciousness of men enters in as direct agents of the social process, this conscious rôle being expressed in the conflict of classes. But in fact to argue with these preachers in scientific terms is waste of time. Their arguments are not seriously meant save as a hypocritical cover for conservatism. The Baldwins and MacDonalds never think of using "gradual" and "persuasive" means when it comes to the tasks of imperialist repression. Guns, tanks and air-bombing are then their forms of "gradualism." It is only to the working class that they preach "gradualism," *i.e.* to put a brake on their advance.

Finally, what of the subtler arguments which profess to recognise the possibility of struggle and civil war with the bourgeoisie, but urge the necessity to exploit to the full the possibilities of parliamentary democracy, the desirability of fighting with the legal right of a parliamentary majority on the workers' side, and so forth ? Here again the same double-dealing is visible. Communism has always advocated the fullest exploitation of the possibilities of parliament, but not as a substitute for the inevitable real struggle ; if it is once advocated as a substitute for the real struggle, it becomes only an instrument of enslavement. Is the "recognition" of the possibility of civil war serious, or is it only a counter in an argument ? If it is said that it is serious, then all the acts and daily propaganda of its spokesmen belie it.

> The heroic promises of lightning-dealing opposition in the event of the Conservatives "daring," and so on, are not worth a brass farthing. One cannot sing lullabies to the masses day after day, full of gabble about a pacific, painless, law-abiding parliamentary democratic transfer to Socialism, and then, at the first serious blow received on the nose, to

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> arouse the masses to armed resistance. That is the surest way of assisting in reaction's break-up of the proletariat.

In burning words Trotsky describes how a real revolutionary situation arises, with how little regard for the niceties and forms of parliamentary right (how would these heroes act, if the Fascist attack were to develop on the working class movement, as in Italy, *before* any Parliamentary majority or Labour Government?) and throwing the responsibilities of action and of facing armed force on the leaders of the working class movement. The "passive" general strike inevitably gives rise to the necessity to protect it from guerilla attacks, saboteurs and provocateurs. The smaller conflicts inevitably extend to larger ones. The Government, once threatened, inevitably brings the armed troops into play. The coming over of the wavering troops inevitably depends on the determination of the revolutionary leaders and the direct attack on the "loyal" troops. The fate of the proletariat, the difference between victory and the scorpions of reaction let loose after defeat, depends on the political and organising preparations of the working class forces, and on the determination and strategy of the leaders, and not at all save in the most secondary degree on the legal and formal parliamentary and other "rights" —which will be covered at once in a cloud of arguments and counter-arguments, as in wartime, so soon as the fight begins ("the attempt of the Conservatives on the House of Commons would be one of the 'noble' motives for agitation, but this is in the ultimate a circumstance of third and fifth-rate importance"— and in addition the choice for this may not lie with the workers).

> The more procrastinating, vacillating and compromising the policy of the leaders of the general strike, the less wavering will there be in the soldiers' ranks, the more determinedly will they support the existing authority, and the more chances will the latter have of coming out victors from the crisis, in order afterwards to let loose all the scorpions of bloody repression on the heads of the working class.
>
> In the revolutionary struggle only the greatest determination is of avail to strike the arms out of the hands of reaction, to limit the period of civil war, and to lessen the number of its victims. If this course be not taken, it is better not to take to arms at all. If arms are not resorted to, it is impossible to organise a general strike; if the general strike is renounced, there can be no thought of any serious struggle. Then there remains only to educate the workers in the spirit of complete prostration, which the official school directing the party, the clergy of

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> all the churches, and . . . the socialistic proclaimers of the impermissibility of violence already do.

These words deserve to be burnt into the consciousness of every centre of the working class movement. They represent the kernel of the situation for the future in England, as in every Capitalist State, whatever the momentary liberal forms and phrases.

The treatment of this question of revolutionary and bourgeois force by the reviewers is deeply significant. Every reviewer combines to oppose Trotsky's argument : that is, to advocate unchallenged submission to the supremacy of bourgeois force and acceptance of only such methods of agitation as are permitted by the bourgeoisie. But the arguments of every reviewer are different, contradictory and in reality nothing but a catchword repetition of exactly the threadbare formulas Trotsky has been patiently pulling to pieces, without the slightest attempt to meet Trotsky's argument.

The arguments (if they can be so called) need only to be set out together to see their general character.

(*a*) Force is useless. " In the long run force accomplishes nothing " (Hunter). " The final word about violence is that this has been the weapon all through the ages, and we are as we were " (Lansbury). These confused " Tolstoyan " arguments bear no relation to the policy of the leadership of the Labour Party, who believe in and use imperialist force, and are therefore irrelevant. To use these arguments in defence of the policy of the existing leaders of the Labour Party against the policy of Trotsky is indefensible.

(*b*) Force is nasty. This is the argument of the Editor of the *Daily Herald*. Under the title " Two views of Life in Conflict " he quotes a phrase of Trotsky concerning Cromwell, about the right of a historic mission to cut through all obstacles and triumphantly affirms the " breakdown " of this argument because Mussolini and British Imperialism also believe in their " historic mission." Certainly they do, and this is precisely why their force can only be met by force, and the talk of arguing them out of their positions (let Fyfe try converting Mussolini) is transparent makebelieve, and evading the issue of repressive force confronting the working class. Fyfe rejects this as a " gloomy

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view." He prefers to set against it the "hope of persuading people that Force is futile," etc. In other words, he puts his "hopes," wishes, personal feelings in front of the facts that he himself admits, because the latter are "gloomy." This is Illusionism. (In addition it is of course as indefensible as the first as a defence of official Labour policy, which accepts bourgeois force and only opposes working class force.)

(*c*) Force is unnecessary. "The battle for freedom is not yet lost. . . . Not only in Parliament, but in churches, trade unions and clubs, this respect for the majority has been inculcated on generations of Englishmen" (Brailsford). "Our traditions and training in majority rule" (Johnston). Here the wish is father to the thought. This is nowhere more curiously illustrated than in Brailsford's own introduction, where he is so eager to re-affirm the existence of English "freedom" after the "nightmare" of the Communist trial, that he actually declares that, if Trotsky's book is successfully issued in England and permitted to be discussed, "then for the moment at least the nightmare of this trial is dissipated." Unfortunately the twelve remain in prison; Hicks remains Home Secretary; the O.M.S. and Special Police recruiting go on; the intentions of the Conservatives are open. But for Brailsford all these mere facts are "dissipated," because a book is issued and he has written an introduction. The "dissipation" is in Brailsford's own mind. Once again, in all this "democratic" view, "hopes" are put forward instead of facing facts.

(*d*) We will fight if . . . etc. These are the "heroic promises" dealt with by Trotsky in the quotation already given, as "not worth a brass farthing." These promises are actually trotted out again by Brailsford, Johnston and others in exactly the same form as before without the slightest attempt to meet Trotsky's destructive arguments: that such promises are practically valueless without previous preparation, that the bourgeoisie will not necessarily allow the proletariat free choice of a strategic ground before attacking, etc.

(*e*) We can't fight because . . . etc. This is an alternative line of argument favoured by Johnston, Russell and others. The "because" always brings up some purely technical reason for

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inability to face the ruling class. Before the war the favourite argument was modern artillery. After the Russian Revolution had disposed of that technical argument, the modern favourite argument follows the line of chemical warfare, the air force or—in England—the food supply.

It is worth noting the effect of this line of argument which places technical in front of political considerations. This means of course simple surrender to the bourgeoisie. It makes a present to the bourgeosie of a public declaration that they are impregnable, and that the workers cannot face a struggle. If that were true, why enter on a struggle at all of which the end is thus foreseen? To imagine that in such circumstances the bourgeoise would let themselves be circumvented by the paper formalities of parliament is excess of innocence. Nothing remains, as Trotsky says, but to "educate the workers in the spirit of complete prostration," etc. In fact the calculation is false, and based on a completely formal unrealistic view of the actual factors and development. But its principal importance at the present moment is the light that it throws on the socialist determination of those who make it. As with all mensheviks in face of every practical difficulty, what should be a technical problem for the revolution to solve becomes at once (without even any attempt at serious consideration) a political reason *against* the revolution.

Johnston himself uses both the last two arguments together. On the one hand he argues, quoting Brailsford, that, if the bourgeoisie compel us we will fight. On the other hand he argues that if we fight, and are presumably certain to be blockaded, "we would perish." How he reconciles his two arguments he does not stop to consider; but in fact both his arguments serve the same purpose—to put off Trotsky's challenge.

Russell's argument is even more instructive. He "agrees" benignly with almost all the points of Trotsky that the rest deny: he finds that "on the politics of the British Labour Movement Trotsky is remarkably well informed"; he agrees on the question of monarchy, on the question of religion, on the imperialism of the Labour Party, on the intellectual and social subservience of the leaders to the bourgeoisie, etc. Nor does he even dispute the inevitability of civil war with the bourgeoisie. But then

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comes his little "practical" difficulty which enables him, as a British citizen, to avoid any revolutionary conclusion to the revolutionary principles, to which, as a philosopher, he has given his assent. Nothing can be done because—Britain is dependent on America. "It is impossible for us to advance at a pace which America will not tolerate." Here is the true English version of Austro-Marxism. Enlarging and developing this liberating conception, Russell discovers that this is the true unguessed-at explanation of the "pacifism" of the British Labour leaders. "The Pacifism which he dislikes in the Labour Movement is forced upon it by the dependence upon America which has resulted from our part in the Great War." Unfortunately for the truth of this statement, the "Pacifism" existed in the British Labour Movement long before there was any question of a "Great War" or dependence on America. The fact that Russell should be reduced to such a demonstrably false argument reveals the straits to which these theoreticians of the Labour Party have been reduced in their efforts to escape the issue raised by Trotsky.

Now these arguments, if placed together, are all mutually contradictory. We are told by these official spokesmen of the Labour Party in reply to Trotsky: (1) that force is useless, (2) that force is nasty, (3) that force is unnecessary (4) that we will fight if necessary, (5) that we can't fight. The argument that all force is wrong is in complete contradiction to the practice of the official Labour leadership. The argument that all force is useless is in complete contradiction to the argument that we will use force if necessary. The argument that we will use force if necessary is in complete contradiction to the argument that we could not fight if we would. And so on endlessly (for the arguments here reproduced are only a selection of the maze offered). But all these contradictory arguments agree in one thing, and in one thing only, and that is the practical conclusion: that we need do nothing now to face the question of bourgeois force and the working class struggle. This common principle alone unites these motley ranks. This is a very striking fact. It means that the arguments themselves are indifferent, variable, taken up and thrown aside at random, individually reached, unthought out, contradictory—that is to say, on a central problem confronting

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the working class there is no attempt at a serious concerted answer : on one thing alone there is agreement ; one thing alone, that is to say, is serious for these " leaders " ; and that is servility to the existing State apparatus and bourgeois legality and force. This is the inevitable conclusion reached from the aggregate of the replies issued to Trotsky on behalf of the official Labour Party leadership.

This conclusion—the complete frivolousness and emptiness of the existing leadership in relation to the actual problems of the working class struggle, and their seriousness only in the question of bourgeois state servility—is the most important outcome of the replies issued to Trotsky on behalf of the official leadership. It is for this very reason that the divorce between these leaders and the working class inevitably grows greater, as the workers are compelled in daily life to find an answer to their problems and to find a leadership which is ready and able to drive a way forward.

In the concluding section of his argument Trotsky shows how the workers in England are already developing as a revolutionary class force, in spite of all the obstacles to hold them in. This is shown most clearly in the development of the trade unions more and more into the political sphere. The history of the Labour Party is only a stage in this process. The real character of this process is shown unmistakeably in the trade union political levy, which is the very basis of the Labour Party, and which Trotsky seizes on with sure insight as the germ of the whole Bolshevist principle :

> In the compulsory anti-Liberal " despotic " exaction of political levies, as the future stem and ear in the germ, is contained all those Bolshevistic methods against which MacDonald does not cease to sprinkle the holy water of his own agitated limitations. The working class has the right and is obliged to place its own considered class will above all the fictions and sophisms of bourgeois democracy.

What is the future of the Trade Unions ? As the economic situation is increasingly bringing home, the Trade Unions have no longer any future in the capitalist framework of society. But this does not mean that they are played out, as the politicians of the Labour Party would like to suggest. On the contrary the Trade Unions have a tremendous future as the main lever of the economic transformation of the country, as the apparatus and source of personnel of the working class regime, and the schools of

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education of the proletariat in the spirit of socialist production. But to accomplish this rôle they need to win power in the hands of the working class, and for this purpose they need to throw up and place at their head a revolutionary party, capable of carrying through the struggle for power. "A reformist, opportunistic, Liberal-Labour Party can only enfeeble the trade unions, thus paralysing the activity of the masses. A revolutionary Labour Party, based on the trade unions, will together with them become a mighty instrument for their restoration to health and their uplift." This transformation is the immediate task. The workers have already driven past the old Liberal Party. They have thrown forward the Independent Labour Party leaders, and these in their turn are being exposed to-day. The so-called Left leaders will in their turn be put to the test.

> Those who in all probability will form the first substitutes, people of the type of Wheatley, Lansbury and Kirkwood, will inevitably reveal that they are only a Left variety of the same fundamentally Fabian type. Such radicalism is limited by democracy and religion, and poisoned with the national arrogance which mentally enslaves the British bourgeoisie. In all probability the working class will have to renew their directive formation several times before they create a party actually answering to the historical situation and tasks of the British proletariat.

But the needs of the workers and the force of events will drive forward to the future which must be reached.

> The Communist Party must develop and come to power as the party of proletarian dictatorship. There are no ways round the difficulty. Whoever believes and preaches that there is can only delude the British workers. This is the main conclusion to be drawn from our analysis.

It will be seen even from the very incomplete survey here given that there is here an argument solidly built, based on a careful and exact estimate of the objective situation in England and the forces in the English working class movement, and requiring at least an equally exact and responsible treatment for an attempt at its refutation.

The bankruptcy of the answers published in the official Labour press is very striking. There is no attempt (with the single exception of the well-intentioned, but extremely innocent and uncomprehending, notice in the *Socialist Review*) to meet Trotsky's objective argument. There is no attempt to consider

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the objective situation in England, the line of development, the policy of the bourgeoisie, the line of development of the working class movement, the next problems of the working class struggle. These questions, which are of very serious importance for the working class, do not exist for the light and airy writers of the official Labour press. For them everything is turned into the personal. Trotsky is "brilliant," "witty," but "arrogant," "offensive," with "execrable taste." Trotsky has "attacked" the Labour leaders, and the natural desire is to attack him back: it is felt as a personal quarrel (Lansbury, after admitting that the book is "theoretically sound"—as if this were an issue of only minor importance like a question of style—goes on to say: "If those of us whom he criticises were put into the mirror of truth, we should be in effect saying to him: 'Yes, and we do not like the look of you either'"). Trotsky is a "Russian"; his standpoint—familiar enough in every country since the *Communist Manifesto of 1847*—is "the Russian standpoint" (Brailsford—perhaps Brailsford thinks the Communist Manifesto a "Russian" document?); he sees everything through "Russian spectacles" and imagines every country must imitate Russia (Hunter); his real aim in advocating revolution in England is because it would be "advantageous to Russia" (Russell—what a childish little piece of spite!). Occasionally some critic discovers some incidental point or other at random, without reference to the context or the line of argument (like Johnston's indignant discovery that Trotsky dares to advocate the abolition of the monarchy as one among a series of demands for a decisive attack on bourgeois class power), and at once sets up an excited clucking, without even waiting or troubling to understand the point first. When finally an attempt is made to touch on any of the central themes and issues raised by Trotsky, such as the issue of bourgeois and revolutionary force or bourgeois democracy, the critic at once falls back on personal feelings, emotions, opinions, hopes, aspirations; dismisses Trotsky's view as "a gloomy view," and expresses warmly, as if they were arguments, his private hopes and faiths, without even attempting to consider the alternative if his faiths should prove unfounded.

This bankruptcy is of course not accidental, but is simply the

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expression of the ideological bankruptcy of the whole school of Fabian Socialism and the Independent Labour Party. To-day it is becoming more and more widely clear that the only coherent view of actual problems possible is the Communist view. Marxism is conquering in England also by the power of facts. Just as thirty years ago the Independent Labour Party was permeating and capturing the trade union bureaucracy, so to-day the younger trade union masses are advancing to Communism. The contrast and conflict between Trotsky's book, with its objective firmness and militant confidence, and his reviewers, with their vague confusion and shoddy sentiment in place of argument, is the contrast between two worlds and the conflict between two classes. Between these two worlds there can be no real contact. The older school of leaders who were bred up in the Liberal tradition (and their younger apprentices at the same trade) will never understand, but will go on repeating their catchphrases and empty sentiments until they pass away or are pushed aside. But the younger workers, who have been bred up in the conditions of the war and after, and whose eyes and ears are eager to take in the facts, the Labour students,the younger trade unionists, the workers' leaders of to-morrow, are learning very fast : and Trotsky's book will help them to learn. Among these Trotsky's book will be eagerly read, and will give stimulus and help ; will help to break the chains of enslavement to old ideas and leadership, to give confidence and clearness and strength, and to show the plain path forward of the struggle. The English working class has cause to be grateful to Trotsky for his book ; and to hope that he will not stay his hand at this short sketch, but will carry forward his work of interpretation, polemic and elucidation, and elaborate his analysis further, which is so much needed in England. For despite all the national philistines, the problems of England, more than of any country, will only be solved by the united force of the whole international movement.

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THE ATTACK ON THE BUILDING TRADE

The Operatives' Reply

By R. COPPOCK

(*General Secretary, National Federation of Building Trades Operatives*)

THE building industry has long been vilified by the capitalist press and blamed for the deplorable housing conditions at present existing. But these are in reality the inevitable result of a European war under the capitalist system, which should itself be in the dock not merely for its post-war inefficiency but for the fact that even prior to the war it was progressively failing to cope with the housing question.

This will be quite clear if one or two facts are borne in mind. Prior to 1906, when the Conciliation Boards were established, wages and conditions were the playthings of chance, the result of good or bad organisation in a particular locality, and their stability, therefore, varied as organisation varied.

For the first five years' existence of the Boards the operatives' lack of understanding of their use caused them to militate against the workers, and as a result many left the industry and its personnel became somewhat depleted; but by 1911 the operatives' representatives had learned from experience how to operate them, and advances in wages began to be registered, although but slowly, chiefly through lack of organisation among the dozen or so unions in the building trade and the fact that local negotiations were still the order of the day. During the years immediately preceding 1918, it became obvious that some more stable and uniform method of procedure was absolutely necessary. As a result there came into existence the demand for a national flat rate and with it and much more important, the co-ordination of all the unions in the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives.

Whatever the enemies of the Federation may say to the contrary, the results of this co-ordination have been sufficiently

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remarkable. Firstly, the North-Western Area Council was formed and the first uniform rate came into being, carrying with it the systematic grading of towns according to the relative cost of living in them. This was followed by the division of the country into ten Regional Councils in all. It was not long before the highest rate, which in 1914 had been 11½d. per hour, had risen to 2s. 4d., where it remained until 1921, whilst the whole of the towns throughout England, Wales and Scotland where employers and operatives were organised were graded.

In 1919 the Federation secured agreement to a uniform 46½ hour week in place of the normal 49½-60 hour week. This was followed in 1920 by the 44 hour week, in which year also national negotiations came definitely into being with the National Wages and Conditions Council for the Building Industry.

But the achievement of the Federation for which the capitalist press and its dupes will never forgive it, was its successful resistance to dilution in 1919-1921.

But now with the slump came the Federation's testing time. The sliding scale began to tell against the workers, and yet it can be quite justifiably maintained that the co-ordinated efforts of the building trade unions have maintained a higher standard of living against the employers' mass attacks than any other industry and have even secured national increases.

When the building trade operatives are accused of obstruction, &c., it should be remembered that they have had to be constantly on the defensive against their employers' attacks, particularly in the shape of claims for reductions in wages outside the terms of the National Agreement, and for the lengthening of the hours of work. This has been particularly marked since the failure of the Building Guilds. There can be no doubt that this menace to private enterprise was the cause of the employers adopting a much more conciliatory attitude towards the organised operatives than they had hitherto done ; it is indeed a fact that the advanced conditions operating on Guild contracts, such as holidays with pay, and payment for sickness and time lost, would have revolutionised the industry could the Guilds have maintained their position, and in fact at one time the employers were driven to seriously consider the Wet Time question in order to counteract them. On the failure

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of the Guilds, however, the employers embarked on an intensive campaign for wage reductions and longer hours. They forced through 2d. reductions in April and June, 1922, and their demand for a further 20 per cent. (4d.) reduction brought on the dispute of 1923, which culminated in the unsatisfactory Frazer Award. There was a half-penny cost-of-living increase in February, 1924, and when the Frazer Award expired the Federation took the offensive with a demand for a 2d. increase, the first demand for a national wage increase in the history of British building trade unionism. The strike of 1924 followed, and although only a half-penny per hour increase was obtained, the retrogressive tendency in wages was definitely checked, and Wet Time payment as a principle for joint negotiation recognised as an item of first-class importance.

Meanwhile, ever since 1922, the Federation has through the National Wages Council improved the lot of its members in two ways which have not received sufficient recognition ; firstly by what is known as the mitigation of the incident by which the 25 per cent. difference between craftsmen's and labourers' rates progressively diminished in the case of the lower-paid areas, and secondly the system of upgrading by which there have been over 400 regrading decisions, thus raising the level throughout the country.

Bound up with the question of dilution is the alleged lack of personnel in the industry and the decay of apprenticeship.

It is not true to say that our personnel is inadequate to meet the tasks set before it ; the figures as to house-building which we shall give later amply show that we can meet all demands laid upon us. Only in Scotland has a small percentage of the personnel migrated to the United States to take advantage of the high rates which are certainly being paid in some American cities.

The decline in the apprenticeship system is entirely due to the fact that before the war the conditions in the industry were so bad that parents would not indenture their sons into it. Not only was it that rates were low, but the total weekly wage was liable to diminution through the seasonal nature of the trade. In 1914, 1s. per hour for craftsmen was operative in only ·18 per cent. of places, 6d. in 5·04 per cent., 6½d. in 7·01 per cent., 7d. in

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10·43 per cent., 7½d. in 8·09 per cent., 8d. in 13·85 per cent., 8½d. in 8·7 per cent., 9d. in 13·13 per cent., and 9½d. in 8·09 per cent. ; above this all but the 10d. rate which obtained in 4·67 per cent. of cases were less than 2 per cent., the 10½d. being ·77 per cent. and the 11d. ·36 per cent.

But of late years the various sections of the trade have very carefully considered this question and many of them evolved quite elaborate educational schemes.

As a result of the findings of the Building Industry Committee dated April 10, 1924, the apprenticeship question was, however, placed on a national basis, and local building industry committees representative of both sides are being set up all over the country. There are now some hundred of these local committees in existence. Last year the Federation made an inquiry among all its branches as to the state of apprenticeship in the industry, and it transpired that 40 per cent. of places in which the Federation has branches have the full complement, and over 27 per cent. under the full complement, whilst in 34 per cent. the position was not really known.

The lack of apprentices is due to quite natural causes apart from the bad conditions prevailing in the industry, conditions so poor that in many places youths prefer to take up work as labourers in order to get the better money. Thus it is due among other things to slackness of trade or of big contracts resulting in jobbing work, the prevalence of small employers, the existence of local charities which militate against the acceptance of a national scheme, and the fact that in some instances the organised operatives go out of the district to work or in others that the practice of indentured apprentices has died out. Apart from this we find that in many places the employers do not consider that apprenticeship is the operatives' business and will not brook any interference, meet them or answer correspondence ; they do not wish to be bothered with many apprentices, prefer unindentured labour on account of its cheapness, object to the rates payable under the scheme as too high or insist on a premium.

The main fear of the local operatives is lest the industry should be swamped with cheap labour, and the payment of expenses to those attending local committees under the Government Scheme.

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This last is a very common ground of complaint. When it is remembered that originally the State intended that each side should pay its own expenses, it will be seen how hard the operative would be hit. He was expected on a weekly wage varying from £3 17s. 6d. in summer to £3 13s. 4d. in winter in the highest paid districts, and £3 in summer to £2 16s. od. in winter in the lowest paid districts (if he could get a full week's work), to miss perhaps half a day's work at stated intervals without any compensation for time lost or payment of travelling expenses, and we maintain that his objection was justified. Eventually the Treasury agreed to pay the munificent sum of 10s. per meeting for not more than four meetings per quarter to cover the total expenses of the whole of the operatives' side, perhaps 1s. 8d. per member. This generous grant was at first made from quarter to quarter only, but has now at long last been stabilised until 1927. The impudence of wealthy newspaper proprietors girding at the lack of the personnel of the industry, when the State is too stingy even adequately to meet the expenses justly incurred by the poorer section of those who are attempting to find a solution for it, is simply colossal.

We are accused among other things of not co-operating in housing, and one section of us in particular, the bricklayers, of practising ca' canny. The following brief statement as to the pre-war and present output of bricks and the decrease in personnel sufficiently refutes this last.

According to the Report on the Present Position of the Building Industry (Cmd. 2104, April 10, 1924), page 12, the number of bricklayers insured in December, 1913, was 68,920, while according to the *Labour Gazette* for January, 1926, the number at July, 1925, was 65,120. Harry Barnes, Vice-President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, in his book *Housing* (Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1923), page 167, states that :—

> Estimates have been made of the amount of the principal materials required in the erection of 100,000 working-class houses by the Tudor Walters Committee as follows : Bricks 2,700,000,000. The output in or import into this country of the above was given as follows : 1911-1913, 2,800,000,000 (average.)

We have been informed by the Ministry of Health that the Building Material Supply Committee have recently made an

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inquiry as to the output of common building bricks, and the replies show that the output at present is 5,114,000,000 for England and Wales. The figures are not available in respect of Scotland. The number of bricks imported during the first eleven months of 1925 was 148,765,000, which according to the Board of Trade, from which the figures were obtained, was not only in the form of bricks but also of brick earth and clay from which the equivalent in bricks was calculated. The Report on the Present Position of the Building Industry stated that the present output of bricks in Scotland was only 227,000,000 per annum, but that it was understood that this could be regularly increased to 300,000,000 in order to make provision for the housing programme (1924).

Our information can, therefore, be summed up as follows :—

Supply	Bricks
1911-1913	2,800,000,000
1925.	
Output England and Wales	5,114,000,000
Scotland (1924) say	227,000,000
Imported January-November	148,765,000
Approximate Total	5,489,765,000

Personnel	
Bricklayers :—	
December, 1913	68,920
July, 1925	65,120

So much for ca' canny !

As regards housing, 159,000 houses, or a greater number than in any year from 1899 onwards, were built in 1925, and 512,987 were rendered fit for habitation by repairs.

It should also be common knowledge, were it not deliberately obscured, that the building trade operatives through their Federation worked hand in glove with John Wheatley, when Minister of Health, in the Labour housing programme. We co-operated in the Building Industry Committee and had a large share in the preparation of the Report on the Present Position of the Building Industry already referred to, the basis of the Wheatley Scheme, and have also taken part in the Government inquiries into rings and possible alternative methods ever since their inception.

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Our mind on alternative methods has been made perfectly clear time after time ; we have no objection to alternative methods as such, and are in fact working in perfect harmony with all the purveyors of steel houses except Lord Weir, but we must and do insist that all work which can be properly described as pertaining to our members involved in their erection must be paid the building trade rate. Lord Weir alone persists in refusing this, although after considerable pressure he has at length agreed to pay the building trade rates to the labourers engaged on excavation work. We have no objection to his paying the engineering rate for the purely engineering work involved, but the Weir house is largely a steel-lined wooden house, and we claim that the carpenters' and joiners' work connected therewith should be paid the full building trade rate. Our whole quarrel with the Government is not one of alternative methods being applied to Scotland, but with their determination to commission Weir to build houses on his own conditions, in doing which we claim that they are violating the Fair Wages Resolution of the House of Commons. The real reason for Lord Weir's preference for the engineering rates was made quite clear when his manager, Mr. Richmond, in reply to a question from Mr. T. Barron, the operatives' President, as to whether if the engineering rate were higher than the building trade rate Lord Weir would still elect to pay it, replied that in that case there would be no necessity to pay the engineering rate, because the building trade rate would have been sufficient to get the men !

Enough has been said in this article to show that the building trade operatives through their Federation have made every effort to efficiently organise their industry. The recent secession of two societies, the bricklayers and plasterers, has tended to undo some of that work, but the reunion of our forces, which we are confident must come sooner or later, will only be the necessary prelude to the development of the ideal which above all things is the reason for our existence, the socialisation of the building industry !

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The World of Labour

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FINLAND

The Split in the Trade Unions

THE Trade Union movement of Finland has been recently the scene of important developments. Since 1918 it has existed under conditions of extreme persecution and terror, but has nevertheless maintained unity and persisted in a militant policy. The membership has recently begun to increase. There has been throughout, however, some conflict between "Left" and "Right" wings within the movement. In 1923, the originally "Left" majority of the Executive Committee decided, in spite of a congress resolution, to send a delegation to the Conference of the International Labour Office. Prolonged discussion followed, and eventually, in 1925, members of the E.C., including the President, Huttenen, resigned and were replaced by a Left Wing majority. This, together with the decision to support the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee, has brought matters to a head.

After a campaign in the Socialist Press, a conference was called in Helsingfors on January 17, 1926, of the members of the Social-Democratic Party in the Trade Unions. Some 300 members and delegates attended, and it was decided to present demands to the next Congress in May, with the threat that if these are not granted the formation of a new National Trade Union Organisation would "be considered." The demands were : a definite break with the R.U.U. (there is no affiliation, as this is illegal), and affiliation to the I.F.T.U. ; co-operation with the I.L.O. ; election of the E.C. by the Congress, instead of appointment of E.C. members by the individual unions ; "adequate" representation of the Social-Democrats, and "political neutrality."

JAPAN

The Japanese Labour Movement in 1925

THE developments taking place in the Japanese labour movement in 1925, mark the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the class struggle in Japan.

Since 1922, when the first waves of the world economic crisis reached Japan, the economic position has grown steadily worse. In June 1925, the official Government organ, the *Japan Advertiser*, reported that the number of unemployed considerably exceeded the figure of two millions at which it stood during the previous year, and was steadily increasing. The position was

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accentuated by the troubles in China. Politically, the result was seen in the party of the Japanese bourgeoisie, the *Kenseikai*, taking complete control of the Government to the exclusion of the representatives of the agrarian interests (the *Seiykai*). This is the first purely bourgeois government that Japan has had. A new franchise law was passed in March, 1925, extending the suffrage from three millions to twelve millions of voters, while simultaneously laws were passed for "safeguarding public tranquillity" which were obviously aimed at detaching the workers from Communist leadership and preventing the use of the extended suffrage in the interests of the revolutionary workers.

In connection with the operation of the above laws, and as a natural concomitant of bourgeois government in the imperialist epoch, the most characteristic feature of the Japanese labour movement during the past year has been the development of reformism. At the end of 1924, just when the Japanese government was changing its policy towards labour, a split appeared for the first time in the Japanese Labour Federation, and unions of communist tendency began to be excluded. By March, 1925, the excluded unions, about twenty-eight in all, founded the Japanese Trade Union Council (Hyogi Kai), representing the left wing in the Japanese T.U. movement.

This was the signal for the open appearance of reformism in Japan. The first step was a tacit agreement with the bourgeois government with regard to the persecution of revolutionary elements. The second step was an agreement with the reformist Trade Union organisations of the West concluded at the session of the International Labour Office in Geneva. Bunji Suzuki, the leader of the Japanese Labour delegation to Geneva, returned with the plan of an "All-Asiatic Labour Conference" to be called in Shanghai during 1926, which would bring together the reformist trade unions of the East, and form a sort of "Singapore Base" for the penetration of reformist influence from Europe.

As soon as the danger of expulsions from the Trade Union Federation began to threaten, there arose the movement for trade union unity. In January, 1925, a Unity Conference was convened in Tokio in which participated some fifty delegates from various unions in Eastern Japan. The object was to explore the possibility of creating a United General Federation of trade unions on a national scale. The reformists answered this by the formation of a reformist National Committee of Labour Unions (*Zenkoku Rodokumili Hyogi-kai.*)

Another step towards unity attempted by the left wing was the endeavour to form a "National Unemployed League." In spite of hard work this has not so far had much success. The Hyogi-kai has declared consistently for an all-inclusive trade union international and condemned the refusal of the Amsterdam International to take up the proposals of the Russian Unions. Important events in the history of the unity campaign in Japan in 1925 were the visits of a Russian Labour Delegation to Japan, and of Japan metal workers to the U.S.S.R.

The culmination of the Unity Movement was the attempt at the formation of a proletarian party. This question is still a central one in the struggle between the reformist and revolutionary elements in the Japanese Labour movement. There have been from the beginning two tendencies. The

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Hyogi-kai with the support of the Japanese peasants' union and a few of the larger trade union organisations has pressed for the establishment of a single, National centralised party comprising various proletarian elements. The Reformist Trade Union Federation proposed the formation of local parties containing only trade unionists.

On August 10, a first preparatary conference was called in Osaka on the initiative of the Japanese peasants' union supported by the Hyogi-kai. On December 1, 1925, the foundation congress of the new "Workers' and Peasants' Party" was held in Tokyo. On the previous day the reformists withdraw from the Committee organising the congress but this failed to prevent its being held. The Government, therefore, proceeded to compel the dissolution of the new party. It is reported that this was the result of a secret agreement between the Minister for Home Affairs and Bunji Suzuki, whereby the latter obtained permission for the creation of a party of his own.

On January 13, 1926, another preliminary conference to discuss the formation of a Labour Party was called by six trade unions and under the pressure of the reformist trade union federation, the peasants' union agreed to the exclusion of the Hyogi-kai from the conference. Thus the reformists are on the way towards the formation of a purely reformist labour party, from which all revolutionary elements will be excluded. It remains to be seen whether this can establish itself under present conditions.

SOUTH AFRICA

Native Progress in South Africa

WITH the growth and development of industry in S. Africa there has likewise taken place a corresponding development among the black and coloured peoples. Owing to their greater cheapness and lower standard of living, the native workers have gradually encroached on industry and been responsible for the steady displacement of large numbers of white workers. And again arising out of this process a strong antagonism has grown up and been displayed towards the blacks by the whites, an antagonism which the employing class have only too readily helped to foster. The white owners inflamed by racial prejudice have attempted to keep themselves strictly apart from the blacks in their industrial organisations, refusing them admittance to the Trade Unions. Faced with this situation and subject to the worst forms of exploitation in workshops, factory, mine, etc., it was only natural that the workers of the Bantu races should set about building up their own industrial organisation.

At the beginning of 1919 what is called the I.C.U. (Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union) was brought into existence. This union commenced its activities by organising the native workers in the Cape Town docks, and in one or two other coast towns, such as Port Elizabeth, East London, etc. Early in its career it found itself involved in strike action for higher wages, and to a certain extent was responsible for securing increased pay for the dock workers. Since that time right up to the present day it has drawn ever increasing numbers of black and coloured workers into its ranks until its actual membership at the moment totals more than 30,000 members.

In contradistinction to this extremely satisfactory progress in native Trade

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Unionism, the plight of the white workers' union has been very woeful indeed. From a membership of 80,000 in 1920 their strength has dropped to less than 40,000 in 1926. Some unions have been worse off than others, particularly those in the Transvaal where the colour bar still remains in force. In the Cape Province (formerly Cape Colony) the colour bar has been broken down for some time past, and many coloured workers have been admitted to the various unions. Things are much different, to a big extent, in the Cape Province owing to the big proportion of coloured workers who serve in many cases as a connecting link between black and white. On the political side also the Cape natives have the "benefit" of the franchise, though how long this is likely to last seems problematical in view of the recent proposals of Premier Hertzog in regard to segregation.

Nowadays however, even in the Transvaal, the necessity of including *all* workers in the Trade Unions is slowly being forced into the minds of the white Trade Unionists. The ground in this direction is being more or less prepared by the admission of coloured workers into the Building Workers' Union and also that of the Tailors. Both these bodies still rigidly oppose the inclusion of blacks, however, and the latter Union, the Tailors', states its intention of limiting the number of coloured members to the seven Malays who have recently been admitted. Nevertheless a straw often shows the way the wind is blowing and the black workers cannot be excluded from the white unions for ever.

Meantime the colour bar policy hits at the white unions themselves. The further growth and development of the I.C.U. is bound to make the white workers seriously consider the overhauling of their ideas, especially when the economic forces at work are persistently pointing out the imperative need of unity of all workers without distinction of colour.

Realising the danger which working class unity presents to private ownership, the minions of the ruling class now at the Government helm in S. Africa, the Pact Government, are making preparations to ensure the maintenance of hostile divisions in the workers' camp. Towards this end Premier Hertzog has outlined a scheme which aims at ostensibly segregrating the black from the white. The purpose of the scheme simply amounts to the formation of a white and Cape coloured bloc against the black.

The African Native Congress, which adopts a wholly racial attitude, has attracted many to its ideas, but has little real organisation worth speaking about. Not so is it in the case of the I.C.U. with its large membership and its numerous branches existing all over the country. It is rapidly getting its message of organisation home to the wide mass of the natives, and taking its stand on a working class platform as opposed to racialism.

The Communist Party of S. Africa lends its assistance in propagating the unity of all workers, both black and white, and before many more years have passed the organised might of the black in industry is going to become one of the most powerful factors in ridding a fertile country of human exploitation.

J. SHIELDS.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE GOLDEN BURDEN OF WALL STREET

American Foreign Investment. Robert W. Dunn. (185 pp. + 236 pp. $5.00. Viking Press, 30 Irving Place, New York City.)

ANY scientific study of Imperialism clearly must embrace a study of overseas investment. Dunn's work will be judged by worker studenst in so far as it contributes to a clearer understanding of this extraordinarily rapid growth of the American bourgeoisie as a world Capitalise power. For, even told, as he tells it, in figures and lists, the story of tht scattering of American surplus wealth over the world, expecially since the war, is a startling one

Already by the turn of the century industrial development, the huge trusts and monopolies, the immense surplus accruing in the hands of the American Capitalists, had marked out all the conditions of Imperialist expansion. Various factors, however, mitigated against the export of capital. The extension of the "frontier" towards the Pacific, and the experiments in technique of imperialism in loans to Haiti, Cuba and the other near estates provided a sufficient field for the ever mounting surplus.

The United States Capitalists were strong enough to preserve their Tom Tiddler's ground intact, in spite of the heavy mortgages raised.

> "*The successful assertion of the Monroe Doctrine by the United States raised that country . . . to the status of a Great Power herself with Latin America as her exclusive field of influence. Thus the lesser American Countries entered into economic and financial relations of the European Powers with almost complete impunity,*"

says one of the bourgeois historians. The whole estate however, borrowed pretty heavily. The total foreign investment in the United States in 1914, was $4 to 5,000 millions (Dunn p.3); American investments only totalled $2,605 millions, more than half of which was in Mexico ($1,050 millions) and Canada ($750 millions). The net indebtedness was $2,500 to $3,000 millions.

This debt was to a large extent liquidated during the war. D.R. Crissinger Controller of the Currency, estimates that $3 billions worth of U.S. securities held in Europe were repurchased during this period. (Dunn, p. 4.)

Repurchase was however, only a minor item. The war acted as a forcing process to U.S. finance capital. By 1917, $2.3 billions had been lent in foreign loans, $1.9 billions of them as loans to the allied nations. Making the world safe for investment brought the allies altogether into the debt of America to the amount of $9 billions, over $7 billions of this being in direct loans of the U.S. Government to European Governments.

The process continued after the war ceased. In the five years 1919 to 1923, a total foreign investment of $3.3 billions was made. $2.3 billions of the total went to Governments, acting in many cases as reconstruction against the revolution.

1923 saw a check to this process. The world's new money mistress grew shy; she would not give herself to the world. She cultivated her own garden

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But the teeming millions would not let her be shy for long : she could not afford it.

America therefore came back, to "bear the financial burden" as the National City Bank of New York charmingly phrases it, into world politics in order to secure the safety of the investments. The foreign financing increased enormously in 1925, it made a new record if the 1916 war issues are excluded. The Federal Reserve Bank figures are as follows :—

	$ million
1924	1,250
1925	1,327

The chief mark of her political intervention was, of course, the Dawes Report, and the fruit of it is the investment in 1925 of $651 millions, or nearly half the total, in Europe, $233 millions going to Germany, and $120 millions to Italy.

But the importance of the European investment must not blind us to the fact, that the United States financiers operate on a world scale. The following figures from Dunn (p. 183) of the total investment show this. His figures are for 1924. We have added the Federal Reserve Bank figures for 1925, though they are not on quite such an inclusive basis as his. It should too be remembered that many transactions are not recordable.

U.S. TOTAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

	At end of 1924 Million dollars	1925	Total
Canada and Newfoundland	2,460	266	2,726
Latin America	4,040	241	4,281
Europe	1,900	651	2,351
Asia and Oceania	690	148	838
Total	9,090	1,237*	10,417
European Government Total Indebtedness (with accrued interest)	12,151†		
Grand Total	21,241		22,568

Dunn's book is a record of this movement of capital. It is a compilation, almost a reference book. It gives lists of capital issues made in recent years ; lists of investments in particular countries ; a brief examination of the banking houses engaged; a useful but indiscriminate bibliography and, in over half the book, documents printed *in extenso* of types of loan contracts of American banking houses.

The strictly limited nature of this work is disappointing. It does not tell us many things we want to know. For instance, what is the policy of the investing houses—has not the bulk of the capital in Europe gone to big heavy industry trusts and electric power concerns ? What is the competitive position of the U.S. capitalists in comparison with other imperialists in particular countries ? These lists tell us little. Dunn gives us some figures which show

*With $ 21 millions "International."

† The amount to Governments, Municipal and Government guaranteed in 1925 to Europe was $504 millions. The total above is chiefly war debts.

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the gain in U.S. investments in Canada and Argentine (pp. 57, 62). But to get an accurate picture we need much fuller comparative figures. What are the issuing houses in Wall Street? How far are they merely intermediaries, if so who for? What are the rival interests inside American capitalism itself?

These questions and many others need to be answered as a preliminary to the understanding of one of the most important features of world capitalism. The expansion of the new Imperialists, and the harsh consolidation of the old, are the two significant movements of world capitalist politics. With sometimes a liaison, sometimes a break, they work towards the final trial of power. Meanwhile the financial burden is flung on to the workers, and chained on to them by all the paraphernalia of political machinery and armed force.

For it is not entirely fanciful to see in these Arabic figures of Dunn's pages, the human figures of millions of Chinese coolies, German miners, Argentine ranchers, the engineers at Hoe's, and many more who are bent and broken by the burden.

H.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Victory of Reason. A Pamphlet on Arbitration. By W. Arnold-Forster. (The Hogarth Press, 2s. 6d.)

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Published by the proprietors
the Trinity Trust
162 *Buckingham*
Palace Road
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and Printed by the London Caledonian Press Ltd.
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